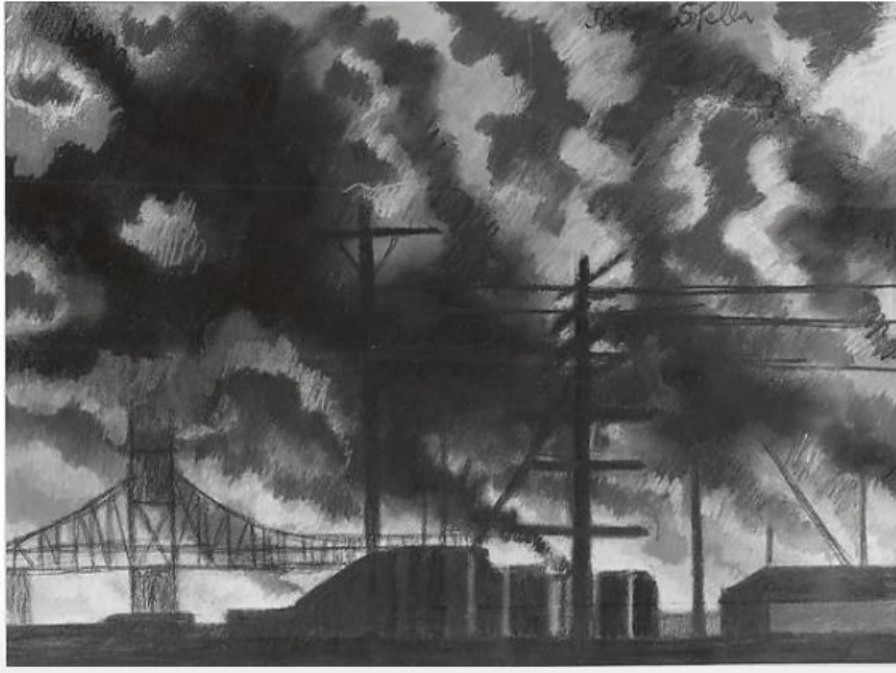


# 1917

Literature of that fateful year.



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## NONE SO BLIND<sup>[21]</sup>

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BY MARY SYNON

From *\_Harper's Magazine\_*.

We were listening to Leila Burton's music--her husband, and Dick Allport, and I--with the throb of London beating under us like the surge of an ocean in anger, when there rose above the smooth harmonies of the piano and the pulsing roar of the night a sound more poignant than them both, the quavering melody of a street girl's song.

Through the purpling twilight of that St. John's Eve I had been drifting in dreams while Leila had gone from golden splendors of chords which reflected the glow on westward-fronting windows into somber symphonies

which had seemed to make vocal the turbulent soul of the city--for Dick Allport and I were topping the structure of that house of life that was to shelter the love we had long been cherishing. With Leila playing in that art which had dowered her with fame, I was visioning the glory of such love as she and Standish Burton gave each other while I watched Dick, sensing rather than seeing the dearness of him as he gave to the mounting climaxes the tense interest he always tendered to Leila's music.

I had known, before I came to love Dick Allport, other loves and other lovers. Because I had followed will-o'-the-wisps of fancy through marshes of sentiment I could appreciate the more the truth of that flame which he and I had lighted for our guidance on the road. A moody boy he had been when I first met him, full of a boy's high chivalry and of a boy's dark despairs. A moody man he had become in the years that had denied him the material success toward which he had striven; but something in the patience of his efforts, something in the fineness of his struggle had endeared him to me as no triumph could have done. Because he needed me, because I had come to believe that I meant to him belief in the ultimate good of living, as well as belief in womanhood, I cherished in my soul that love of him which yearned over him even as it longed for him.

Watching him in the dusk while he lounged in that concentrated quiet of attention, I went on piling the bricks of that wide house of happiness we should enter together; and, although I could see him but dimly, so well did I know every line of his face that I could fancy the little smile that quivered around his lips and that shone from the depths of his eyes as Leila played the measures we both loved. I must have been smiling in answer when the song of the girl outside rose high.

Not until that alien sound struck athwart the power and beauty of the spell did I come to know how high I had builded my castles; but the knocking at the gate toppled down the dreams as Leila swept a discord over the keyboard and crossed to the open window.

In the dusk, as she flung back the heavy curtains, I could see the bulk of Brompton Oratory set behind the houses like the looming back-drop of a painted scene. Nearer, in front of a tall house across the way, stood the singer, a thin girl whose shadowy presence seemed animated by a curious bravery. In a nasal, plaintive voice she was singing the words of a ballad of love and of loving that London, as only London can, had made curiously its own that season. The insistence of her plea--for she sang as if she cried out her life's longing, sang as if she called on the passing crowd not for alms, but for understanding--made her for the moment, before she faded back into oblivion, an artist, voicing the heartache and the heartbreak of womankind; and the artist in Leila Burton responded to the thrill.

Until the ending of the song she stood silent in front of the window, unconscious of the fact that she, and not the scene beyond her, held the center of the stage. Not for her beauty, although at times Leila Burton gave the impression of being exquisitely lovely, was she remarkable, but rather for that receptive attitude that made her an inspired listener. In me, who had known her for but a little while, she awakened my deepest and drowsiest ambition, the desire to express in pictures the light and the shade of the London I knew. With her I could feel the power, and the glory, and the fear, and the terror of the city as I never did at other times. It was not alone that she was all things to all men; it was that she led men and women who knew her to the summits of their aspirations.

Even Standish Burton, big, sullen man that he was, immersed in his engineering problems, responded to his wife's spiritual charm with a readiness that always aroused in Dick and myself an admiration for him that our other knowledge of him did not justify. He was, aside from his relationship to Leila, a man whose hardness suggested a bitter knowledge of dark ways of life. Now, crouched down in the depths of his chair, he kept watching Leila with a gaze of smouldering adoration, revealing that love for her which had been strong enough to break down those barriers which she had erected in the years while he had worked for her in Jacob's bondage. In her he seemed to be discovering, all over again, the vestal to tend the fires of his faith.

Dick Allport, too, bending forward over the table on which his hands fell clenched, was studying Leila with an inscrutable stare that seemed to be of query. I was wondering what it meant, wondering the more because my failure to understand its meaning hung another veil between my vision and my shrine of belief in the fullness of love, when the song outside came to an end and Leila turned back to us.

Her look, winging its way to Standish, lighted her face even beyond the glow from the lamps which she switched on. For an instant his heavy countenance flared into brightness. Dick Allport sighed almost imperceptibly as he turned to me. I had a feeling that such a fire as the Burtons kindled for each other should have sprung up in the moment between Dick and me, for we had fought and labored and struggled for our love as Standish and Leila had never needed to battle. Because of our constancy I expected something better than the serene affectionateness that shone in Dick's smile. I wanted such stormy passion of devotion as Burton gave to Leila, such love as I, remembering a night of years ago, knew that Dick could give. It was the old desire of earth, spoken in the street girl's song, that surged in me until I could have cried out in my longing for the soul of the sacrament whose substance I had been given; but the knowledge that we were, the four of us, conventional people in a conventional setting locked my heart as it locked my lips until I could mirror the ease with which Leila bore herself.

"I have been thinking," she said, lightly, "that I should like to be a

street singer for a night. If only a piano were not so cumbersome, I should go out and play into the ears of the city the thing that girl put into her song."

"Why not?" I asked her, "It would be an adventure, and life has too few adventures."

"It might have too many," Dick said.

"Not for Leila," Standish declared. "Life's for her a quest of joy."

"That's it," Dick interposed. "Her adventures have all been joyous."

"But they haven't," Leila insisted. "I'm no spoiled darling of the gods. I've been poor, poor as that girl out there. I've had heartaches, and disappointments, and misfortunes."

"Not vital ones," Dick declared. "You've never had a knock-out blow."

"She doesn't know what one is," Standish laughed, but there sounded a ruefulness in his laughter that told of the kind of blow he must once have suffered to bring that note in his voice. Standish Burton took life lightly, except where Leila was concerned. His manner now indicated, almost mysteriously, that something threatened his harbor of peace, but the regard Leila gave to him proved that the threat of impending danger had not come to her.

"Oh, but I do know," she persisted.

"Vicariously," I suggested. "All artists do."

"No, actually," she said.

"You're wrong," said Standish. "You're the sort of woman whom the world saves from its own cruelties."

There was something so essentially true in his appraisal of his wife that the certainty covered the banality of his statement and kept Dick and myself in agreement with him. Leila Burton, exquisitely remote from all things commonplace, was unquestionably a woman to be protected. Without envy--since my own way had its compensations in full measure--I admitted it.

"I think that you must have forgotten, if you ever knew," she said, "how I struggled here in London for the little recognition I have won."

"Oh, that!" Dick Allport deprecated. "That isn't what Stan means. Every one in the world worth talking about goes through that sort of struggle. He means the flinging down from a high mountain after you've seen the

glories, not of this world, but of another, the casting out from paradise after you've learned what paradise may mean. He spoke with an odd timbre of emotion in his voice, a quality that puzzled me for the moment.

"That's it," said Standish, gratefully. "Those are the knock-out blows."

"Well, then, I don't know them"--Leila admitted her defeat--"and I hope that I shall not."

Softly she began to play the music of an accompaniment. There was a familiar hauntingness in its strains that puzzled me until I associated them with the song that Burton used to whistle so often in the times when Leila was in Paris and he had turned for companionship to Dick and to me.

"I've heard Stan murder that often enough to be able to try it myself," I told her.

"I didn't know he knew it," she said. "I heard it for the first time the other day. A girl--I didn't hear her name--sang it for an encore at the concert of the Musicians' Club. She sang it well, too. She was a queer girl," Leila laughed, "a little bit of a thing, with all the air of a tragedy queen. And you should have heard how she sang that! You know the words?"--she asked me over her shoulder:

"And because I, too, am a lover,  
And my love is far from me,  
I hated the two on the sands there,  
And the moon, and the sands, and the sea."

"And the moon, and the sands, and the sea," Dick repeated. He rose, going to the window where Leila had stood, and looking outward. When he faced us again he must have seen the worry in my eyes, for he smiled at me with the old, endearing fondness and touched my hair lightly as he passed.

"What was she like--the girl?" Standish asked, lighting another cigarette.

"Oh, just ordinary and rather pretty. Big brown eyes that seemed to be forever asking a question that no one could answer, and a little pointed chin that she flung up when she sang." Dick Allport looked quickly across at Burton, but Stan gave him no answering glance. He was staring at Leila as she went on: "I don't believe I should have noticed her at all if she hadn't come to me as I was leaving the hall. 'Are you Mrs. Standish Burton?' she asked me. When I told her that I was, she stared me full in the face, then walked off without another word. I wish that I could describe to you, though, the scorn and contempt that blazed in

her eyes. If I had been a singer who had robbed her of her chance at Covent Garden, I could have understood. But I'd never seen her before, and my singing wouldn't rouse the envy of a crow!" She laughed light-heartedly over the recollection, then her face clouded. "Do you know," she mused, "that I thought just now, when the girl was singing on the street, that I should like to know that other girl? There was something about her that I can't forget. She was the sort that tries, and fails, and sinks. Some day, I'm afraid, she'll be singing on the streets, and, if I ever hear her, I shall have a terrible thought that I might have saved her from it, if only I had tried!"

"Better let her sort alone," Burton said, shortly. He struck a match and relit his cigarette with a gesture of savage annoyance. Leila looked at him in amazement, and Dick gave him a glance that seemed to counsel silence. There was a hostility about the mood into which Standish relapsed that seemed to bring in upon us some of the urgent sorrows of the city outside, as if he had drawn aside a curtain to show us a world alien to the place of beauty and of the making of beauty through which Leila moved. Even she must have felt the import of his mood, for she let her hands fall on the keys while Dick and I stared at each other before the shock of this crackle that seemed to threaten the perfection of their happiness.

From Brompton came the boom of the bell for evensong. Down Piccadilly ran the roar of the night traffic, wending a blithesome way to places of pleasure. It was the hour when London was wont to awaken to the thrill of its greatness, its power, its vastness, its strength, and its glory, and to send down luminous lanes its carnival crowd of men and women. It was the time when weltering misery shrank shrouded into merciful gloom; when the East End lay far from our hearts; when poverty and sin and shame went skulking into byways where we need never follow; when painted women held back in the shadows; when the pall of night rested like a velvet carpet over the spaces of that floor that, by daylight, gave glimpses into loathsome cellars of humanity. It was, as it had been so often of late, an hour of serene beauty, that first hour of darkness in a June night with the season coming to an end, an hour of dusk to be remembered in exile or in age.

There should have come to us then the strains of an orchestra floating in with the fragrance of gardenias from a vendor's basket, symbols of life's call to us, luring us out beneath stars of joy. But, instead, the bell of Brompton pealed out warningly over our souls, and, when its clanging died, there drifted in the sound of a preaching voice.

Only phrases clattering across the darkness were the words from beyond--resonant through the open windows: "The Cross is always ready, and everywhere awaiteth thee.... Turn thyself upward, or turn thyself downward; turn thyself inward, or turn thyself outward; everywhere thou shalt find the Cross;... if thou fling away one Cross thou wilt find

another, and perhaps a heavier."

Like sibylline prophecy the voice of the unseen preacher struck down on us. We moved uneasily, the four of us, as he cried out challenge to the passing world before his voice went down before the surge of a hymn. Then, just as the gay whirl of cars and omnibuses beat once more upon the pavements, and London swung joyously into our hearts again, the bell of the telephone in the hall rang out with a quivering jangle that brought Leila to her feet even as Standish jumped to answer its summons.

She stood beside the piano as he gave answer to the call, watching him as if she expected evil news. Dick, who had moved back into the shadow from a lamp on the table, was staring with that same searching gaze he had bestowed on her when she had lingered beside the window. I was looking at him, when a queer cry from Standish whirled me around.

In the dim light of the hall he was standing with the instrument in his hands, clutching it with the stupidity of a man who has been struck by an unexpected and unexplainable missile. His face had gone to a grayish white, and his hands trembled as he set the receiver on the hook. His eyes were bulging from emotion and he kept wetting his lips as he stood in the doorway.

"What is it?" Leila cried. "What's happened, Stan? Can't you tell me? What is it?"

Not to her, but to Dick Allport, he made answer. "Bessie Lowe is dead!"

I saw Dick Allport's thunderstruck surprise before he arose. I saw his glance go from Standish to Leila with a questioning that overrode all other possible emotion in him. Then I saw him look at Burton as if he doubted his sanity. His voice, level as ever, rang sharply across the other man's distraction.

"When did she die?" he asked him.

"Just now." He ran his hand over his hair, gazing at Dick as if Leila and I were not there. "She--she killed herself down in the Hotel Meynard."

"Why?" Leila's voice, hard with terror, snapped off the word.

"She--she--I don't know." He stared at his wife as if he had just become conscious of her presence. The grayness in his face deepened, and his lips grew livid. Like a man condemned to death, he stared at the world he was losing.

"Who is Bessie Lowe?" Leila questioned. "And why have they called you to tell of her?" Her eyes blazed with a fire that seemed about to singe

pretense from his soul.

His hand went to his throat, and I saw Leila whiten. Her hand, resting on the piano, trembled, but her face held immobile, although I knew that all the happiness of the rest of her life hung upon his answer. On what Standish Burton would tell her depended the years to come. In that moment I knew that she loved him even as I loved Dick, even as women have always loved and will always love the men whom fate had marked for their caring; and in a sudden flash of vision I knew, too, that Burton, no matter what Bessie Lowe or any other girl had ever been to him, worshiped his wife with an intensity of devotion that would make all his days one long reparation for whatever wrong he might have done her. I knew, though, that, if he had done the wrong, she would never again be able to give him the eager love he desired, and I, too, an unwilling spectator, waited on his words for his future, and Leila's; but his voice did not make answer. It was Dick Allport who spoke.

"Bessie Lowe is a girl I used to care for," he said. "She is the girl who sang at the Musicians' Club, the girl who spoke to you. She heard that I was going to be married. She wanted me to come back to her. I refused."

He was standing in the shadow, looking neither at Leila nor at me, but at Standish Burton. Burton turned to him.

"Yes," he muttered thickly, "they told me to tell you. They knew you'd be here."

"I see," said Leila. She looked at Standish and then at Dick Allport, and there came into her eyes a queer, glazed stare that filmed their brightness. "I am sorry that I asked questions, Mr. Allport, about something that was nothing to me. Will you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to be forgiven," he said. He turned to her and smiled a little. She tried to answer his smile, but a gasp came from her instead.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she said, "so sorry for her!"

It was Standish's gaze that brought to me sudden realization that I, too, had a part in the drama. Until I found his steady stare on me I had felt apart from the play that he and Dick and Leila were going through, but with his urgent glare I awoke into knowledge that the message he had taken for Dick held for me the same significance that Leila had thought it bore for her. Like a stab from a knife came the thought that this girl--whoever she was--had, in her dying, done what she had not done in life, taken Dick Allport from me. There went over me numbing waves of a great sense of loss, bearing me out on an ocean of oblivion. Against these I fought desperately to hold myself somewhere near the shore of



sensibility. As if I were beholding him from a great distance, I could see Dick standing in the lamplight in front of Leila Burton. Understanding of how dear he was to me, of how vitally part of me he had grown in the years through which I had loved him--sometimes lightly, sometimes stormily, but always faithfully--beaconed me inshore; and the plank of faith in him, faith that held in itself something of forgiving charity, floated out to succor my drowning soul. I moved across the room while Standish Burton kept his unwinking gaze upon me, and Leila never looked up from the piano. I had come beside Dick before he heard me.

He looked at me as if he had only just then remembered that I was there. Into his eyes flashed a look of poignant remorse. He shrank back from me a little as I touched his hand, and I turned to Leila, who had not stirred from the place where she had listened to Standish's cry when he took the fateful message. "We are going," I said, "to do what we can--for her."

She moved then to look at me, and I saw that her eyes held not the compassion I had feared, but a strange speculativeness, as if she questioned what I knew rather than what I felt. Their contemplating quiet somehow disturbed me more than had her husband's flashlight scrutiny, and with eyes suddenly blinded and throat drawn tight with terror I took my way beside Dick Allport out from the soft lights of the Burtons' house into the darkness of the night.

Outside we paused a moment, waiting for a cab. For the first time since he had told Leila of Bessie Lowe, Dick spoke to me. "I think," he said, "that it would be just as well if you didn't come."

"I must," I told him, "It isn't curiosity. You understand that, don't you? It is simply that this is the time for me to stand by you, if ever I shall do it, Dick."

"I don't deserve it." There was a break in his voice. "But I shall try to, my dear. I can't promise you much, but I can promise you that."

Down the brightness of Piccadilly into the fuller glow of Regent Street we rode without speech. Somewhere below the Circus we turned aside and went through dim cañons of houses that opened a way past the Museum and let us into Bloomsbury. There in a wilderness of cheap hotels and lodging-houses we found the Meynard.

A gas lamp was flaring in the hall when the porter admitted us. At a desk set under the stairway a pale-faced clerk awaited us with staring insolence that shifted to annoyance when Dick asked him if we might go to Bessie Lowe's room. "No," he said, abruptly. "The officers won't let any one in there. They've taken her to the undertaker's."

He gave us the location of the place with a scorn that sent us out in

haste. I, at least, felt a sense of relief that I did not have to go up to the place where this unknown girl had thrown away the greatest gift. As we walked through the poorly lighted streets toward the Tottenham Court Road I felt for the first time a surge of that emotion that Leila Burton had voiced, a pity for the dead girl. And yet, stealing a look at Dick as he walked onward quietly, sadly, but with a dignity that lifted him above the sordidness of the circumstances, I felt that I could not blame him as I should. It was London, I thought, and life that had tightened the rope on the girl.

Strangely I felt a lightness of relief in the realization that the catastrophe having come, was not really as terrible as it had seemed back there in Leila's room. It was an old story that many women had conned, and since, after all, Dick Allport was yet young, and my own, I condoned the sin for the sake of the sinner; and yet, even as I held the thought close to my aching heart, I felt that I was somehow letting slip from my shoulders the cross that had been laid upon them, the cross that I should have borne, the burden of shame and sorrow for the wrong that the man I loved had done to the girl who had died for love of him.

The place where she lay, a gruesome establishment set in behind that highway of reeking cheapness, the Tottenham Court Road, was very quiet when we entered. A black-garbed man came to meet us from a room in which we saw two tall candles burning. Dick spoke to him sharply, asking if any one had come to look after the dead girl.

"No one with authority," the man whined--"just a girl as lived with her off and on."

He stood, rubbing his hands together as Dick went into hurried details with him, and I went past them into the room where the candles burned. For an instant, as I stood at the door, I had the desire to run away from it all, but I pulled myself together and went over to the place where lay the girl they had called Bessie Lowe.

I had drawn back the sheet and was standing looking down at the white face when I heard a sob in the room. I replaced the covering and turned to see in the corner the shadowy form of a woman whose eyes blazed at me out of the dark. While I hesitated, wondering if this were the girl who had lived occasionally with Bessie Lowe, she came closer, staring at me with scornful hate. Miserably thin, wretchedly nervous as she was, she had donned for the nonce a mantle of dignity that she seemed to be trailing as she approached, glaring at me with furious resentment. "So you thought as how you'd come here," she demanded of me, her crimsoned face close to my own, "to see what she was like, to see what sort of a girl had him before you took him away from her? Well, I'll tell you something, and you can forget it or remember it, as you like. Bessie Lowe was a good girl until she ran into him, and she'd have stayed good, I tell you, if he'd let her alone. She was a fool, though, and she

thought that he'd marry her some day--and all the time he was only waiting until you'd take him! You never think of our kind, do you, when you're living out your lives, wondering if you care enough to marry the men who're worshipping you while they're playing with us? Well, perhaps it won't be anything to you, but, all the same, there's some kind of a God, and if He's just He'll punish you when He punishes Standish Burton!"

"But I--" I gasped. "Did you think that I--?"

"Aren't you his wife?" She came near to me, peering at me in the flickering candle-light. "Aren't you Standish Burton's wife?"

"No," I said.

"Oh, well"--she shrugged--"you're her sort, and it'll come to the same thing in the end."

She slouched back to the corner, all anger gone from her. Outside I heard Dick's voice, low, decisive. Swiftly I followed the girl. "You must tell me," I pleaded with her, "if she did it because of Standish Burton."

"I thought everybody knew that," she said, "even his wife. What's it to you, if you're not that?"

"Nothing," I replied, but I knew, as I stood where she kept vigil with Bessie Lowe, that I lied. For I saw the truth in a lightning-flash; and I knew, as I had not known when Dick perjured himself in Leila's music-room, that I had come to the place of ultimate understanding, for I realized that not a dead girl, but a living woman, had come between us. Not Bessie Lowe, but Leila Burton, lifted the sword at the gateway of my paradise.

With the poignancy of a poisoned arrow reality came to me. Because Dick had loved Leila Burton he had laid his bond with me on the altar of his chivalry. For her sake he had sacrificed me to the hurt to which Standish would not sacrifice her. And the joke of it--the pity of it was that she hadn't believed them! But because she was Burton's wife, because it was too late for facing of the truth, she had pretended to believe Dick; and she had known, she must have known, that he had lied to her because he loved her.

The humiliation of that knowledge beat down on me, battering me with such blows as I had not felt in my belief that Dick had not been true to me in his affair with this poor girl. Her rivalry, living or dead, I could have endured and overcome--for no Bessie Lowe could ever have won from Dick, as she could never have given to him, that thing which was mine. But against Leila Burton I could not stand, for she was of my

world, of my own people, and the crown a man would give to her was the one he must take from me.

There in that shabby place I buried my idols. Not I, but a power beyond me, held the stone on which was written commandment for me. By the light of the candles above Bessie Lowe I knew that I should not marry Dick Allport.

I found him waiting for me at the doorway. I think that he knew then that the light of our guiding lantern had flickered out, but he said nothing. We crossed the garishly bright road and went in silence through quiet streets. Like children afraid of the dark we went through the strange ways of the city, two lonely stragglers from the procession of love, who, with our own dreams ended, saw clearer the world's wild pursuit of the fleeing vision.

We had wandered back into our own land when, in front of the darkened Oratory and almost under the shadow of Leila Burton's home, there came to us through the soft darkness the ominous plea that heralds summer into town. Out of the shadows an old woman, bent and shriveled, leaned toward us. "Get yer lavender tonight," she pleaded. "'Tis the first of the crop, m'lidy."

"That means--" Dick Allport began as I paused to buy.

I fastened the sprigs at my belt, then looked up at the distant stars, since I could not yet bear to look at him. "It means the end of the season," I said, "when the lavender comes to London."

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## RAINBOW PETE<sup>[13]</sup>

[Note 13: Copyright, 1917, by The Pictorial Review Company.  
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BY RICHARD MATTHEWS HALLET

From The Pictorial Review

In pursuance of a policy to detain us on the island at Sick Dog until the arrival of his daughter, Papa Isbister thought fit to tell us the fate of Rainbow Pete, of whose physical deformity and thirst for gold we knew something already. Rainbow Pete had come to Mushrat Portage, playing his flute, at a time when preparations were being made to blast a road-bed through the wilderness for the railroad.

Mushrat Portage had been but recently a willow clump, and a black rock ledge hanging over a precipitous valley: the hand of the Indian could be seen one day parting the leaves of the trail, and on the next, drills came and tins of black powder, and hordes of greedy men, blind with a burning zeal for "monkeying with powder" as our host of Sick Dog said. They were strange men, hoarse men, unreasonable men who cast sheep's-eyes at the dark woman from Regina, whose shack, rented of Scarecrow Charlie, crowned the high point of the ledge. She was the only woman on Mushrat, and at a time just before the blasting began, when Rainbow Pete sauntered over the trail with his pick and his flute and his dirty bag of rock specimens, she was hungrily watched and waited on by the new inhabitants of that ancient portage--Mushrat, whose destinies were soon to be so splendid, and whose skies were to be rocked and rent by the thunders of men struggling with reluctant nature, monkeying with powder.

When Pete laid down his tools and guns on the table at Scarecrow Charlie's, where the woman was employed, had he in his heart some foreshadowing presentiment of the peril he was in, of the sharp destroying fire of a resolute woman's eyes, which he was subjecting himself to, in including her in his universal caress? Who knows? Perhaps his flute had whispered tidings to him. He was, said Papa Isbister, immensely proud of his plaything, this huge gaunt sailor, who had been bent into the shape of a rainbow--the foot of a rainbow--by a chance shot, which shattered his hip and gave him an impressive forward cant, which appeared to women, it seemed--I quote my old friend--in the light of an endearing droop.

The romantic visitation of this musical sailorman made the efforts of all Mushrat as nothing. But Rainbow Pete seemed unaware of the fiery jealousies glowing in the night on all sides of him when he fixed his eyes on her for the first time--with that mellow assurance of a careless master of the hearts and whims of women.

"What's this he said to her?" said our old friend. "It was skilful; it was put like a notable question if she took it so."

"You don't want to go out to-night," he said to her, with his guns on the table.

"No, I do not," she said to the man.

"There you will be taking the words out of my mouth to suit your heart," he went on saying to her. "Mark this, I'm making this a command to you. You don't want to go out to-night. Do not do it."

This he told her was on account of stray bullets, because he was meaning to shoot up that place.

Heh! It was a trick of his, to trap her into denying him when he had made no offer.

Old Isbister laughed heartily at this picture of Pete in the days of his triumph.

He was a captivating man, it appeared. He was tattooed. On his arms were snakes and the like of that, daggers and the like of that, dragons and the like of that. This was a romantic skin to the man; and his blue eyes were like the diamond drills they were bringing to Mushrat.

"Oh my," said the woman, leaning at his table, "this is what will be keeping me from mass, I shouldn't wonder."

This was a prairie woman from Regina; now mark, it was whispered to be no credit to human nature that she had had to leave that town. No. She was a full woman, very deep, with burning eyes. It was hard talking with her, because of her lingering speech. Oh, she was a massive woman, for the small shoes she wore. She was tall, as high as Rainbow Pete's shoulder. She purchased scent for her hair. This I know, having seen it standing in the bottles. She was a prairie woman.

This was a wild night we spent on Mushrat, after Pete's reproving the woman there in Scarecrow Charlie's place. Smash McGregor, the little doctor, was sitting between us in his yellow skull-cap; and Willis Countryman was reading and drinking in one corner, listening to the laughing men there. They were laughing, thinking of the fortunes there would be here when blasting begun.

But Rainbow Pete was not one of the rockmen. No. He told them strange tales of gold. Heh! He was athirst for gold. Strange tales he told of gold. Once how in Australia he had hold of a lump of it as big as poor McGregor's skull, but isn't it a perishing pity, oh my, this was just a desert where he was, there was no water, he grew faint carrying the nugget. Our mouths were open when the man told us he had dropped it in the desert, with his name carved on it.

"There it is to this day, sinking in the sands," he said. Oh, the proud woman from Regina. There she turned her dark eyes over our heads, never looking at the plausible man at all; but she had heard him.

"Gold?" said Smash McGregor. "Why, there's gold enough in the world."

"Ay, there's comfort too, if you know where to take it," said Rainbow Pete, twirling here at his mustache and looking at the woman.

"There's gold," said McGregor, "for any man."

"Yes, my hearty," said Pete, "it's twinkling in the river-beds, it

shines in the sands under your feet, but still it's hard to get in your two fisties."

"Why," said Smash McGregor, "did you never hear there's a pot of gold at the foot of every rainbow?"

Oh, my friend, as he went mentioning the rainbow, there was a thunder-cap on the brow of that great sailor.

"So they call me--Rainbow Pete," he said.

"Look then," said McGregor, "take the pick, and strike the ground at your feet."

Rainbow Pete was not hearing them.

"This is a man I have been following on many trails," he muttered, "This man who made a rainbow of me. Mark this, he shall thirst, if I meet him. Ay! He shall burn with these fingers at his throat. He shall have gold poured into him like liquid, however."

It was plain he had no love for this man who had fashioned him in the form of a rainbow.

"What is this man called?" said the little doctor.

"It's a dark man wearing a red cap, called Pal Yachy," said Rainbow Pete. "He spends his time escaping me. Look, where he shot me in the hip."

Now we shielded him, and he drew out his shirt showing the wound in the thigh which made a rainbow of him; but stop, didn't McGregor discover the strange business on his spine?

"What's this, however?" he said.

"This is a palm-tree," said the man. "Stand close about me."

Oh my, we stood close, watching the man twisting up his shirt, and here we saw the palm-tree going up his spine, and every joint of his spine was used for a joint of the tree, like; and the long blue leaves were waving on his shoulder-blade when he would be rippling the skin. This was a fine broad back like satin to be putting a palm-tree on. Look, as I am lifting my head, here I see the dark woman silent at the bar, burning up with curiosity at what we are hiding here. Listen, it's the man's voice, under his shirt.

"This was done in the South Seas, when I was young," he said to us, "and the bigger I grow, the bigger the tree is. And now what next?" Then he

put his shirt back, and stood up to be fixing an eye on the woman from Regina.

He was first to be waited on at Scarecrow Charlie's. Yes, he was first. This was a mystery of a man to that dark woman from Regina.

Now in these days before blasting began, they were fond of talking marriage on Mushrat, thinking of this woman from Regina, who was at the disposal of no man there. They were full of doubts and wonderments, when they would be idling together in Scarecrow Charlie's. But now one morning when they were idling there, Shoepack Sam must be yawning and saying to them,

"Oh, my, this is the time now, before the sun is up, I'm glad I am not married. It's a pleasure to be a single man at this hour."

Heh! Heh! As a usual thing we are not gratified at all for this favor of heaven. A single man, Shoepack Sam was saying, would not have to be looking at the wreck of his wife in the morning; and this is when women were caught unawares in the gill-nets time is lowering for them.

"They are pale about the gills then," he said. "They are just drowned fish. They have stayed in the nets too long."

"No, it's not certain," said Rainbow Pete. "She might be pleasant-looking on the pillow with her hair adrift."

Then Shoepack told him that the salt water had leaked into his brains, what with his voyages.

"Still, this is a beautiful cheek," said Pete, speaking low, because she was moving about beyond the boards.

"These things are purchased," said Shoepack, scraping his feet together in yellow moosehides. "Listen to me, I have seen them in a long line, on her shelf, with many odors."

So they were talking together, and Rainbow Pete was putting his fingers to the flute and staring down the valley, where Throat River was twisting like a rag.

"I could have had a wife for speaking at Kicking Horse," he said.

"There is one for speaking now," said Shoepack.

"In a few days I go North," Rainbow Pete went muttering. "There is gold at Dungeon Creek. I have seen samples of this vein."

"She will be the less trouble to you then, if you are not satisfied on



this question," said Shoepack Sam.

Then Rainbow Pete said he was not so certain of her, on questioning himself. He was a modest man.

"This palm-tree and the other designs you have not been speaking about will be enticing her," said Shoepack Sam. "But do not speak to her of going away at the time of asking her."

"This is wisdom," said Rainbow Pete, and he put his lips to the flute, to be giving us a touch of music.

This was a light reason for marriage, didn't it seem? This was what Willis Countryman called a marriage of convenience, in the fashion of frogs. Ay! It was convenient to them to be married. He was a great reader--Willis.

So they were married, I'm telling you, but it's impossible to know what he said to her in speaking about it. They were married by the man called Justice of the Peace on Mushrat. This was before the blasting, and it was the first marriage on Mushrat.

Then they lived together in the little house she had chosen, sitting on the black ledge above Scarecrow Charlie's eating-place. Now it was a wonderment to Mushrat, to hear the sound of Rainbow Pete's old flute dropping from the dark ledge, by night, when they were taking their opinion of matrimony up there together, with a candle at the window.

But now look here, when Shoepack Sam came plucking him at the elbow, saying, "Was I right or was I wrong?" then Rainbow Pete stared at him with his eyes like drills, and he said to him, "You were curious and nothing more." Oh my, isn't this the perversity of married men.

They bore him a grudge on Mushrat, for his silence, because, didn't it seem, this was like a general marriage satisfying all men's souls. It was treasonable. Oh my, it was sailor's mischief to be living on that ledge, and dropping nothing but notes from his greasy flute. These are sweet but they are hard to be turning into language.

Now one morning, when I saw him coming from the ledge with his bag of specimens over his shoulder, I saw without speaking to him that he was parching with his thirst for gold. He was going away into the bush, thinking no more of his new wife. Oh, he was a casual man.

"How is this?" I said. "Can she be left alone on the ledge?"

"Can she not?" said Rainbow Pete. "Old fellow, this is a substantial woman. She was alone before I came."

"This is not the same thing," I said.

"It is the same woman," said Rainbow Pete, "she will be missing nothing but the flute."

Oh my, wasn't the flute a little thing to reckon with. He went North, dreaming of gold, and here the matter they were thinking about was locked in his heart. They were angry with the man on Mushrat. This was not what they were looking for between friends. They were hoping to learn the result of the experiment; but this was vain.

When he was gone, I saw her looking down into the valley, where the first shots were being fired in the rock. Ay, the sun was dazzling her eyes, but she did not move, sitting as if her arms have been chopped from the shoulders.

Now it was not many days after this that the blasting was begun on Mushrat. Men came with instruments stamped by the government; these they pointed down the trail and drove stakes into the ground. These were great days on Mushrat. Oh yes, numbers of Swedes and Italians were in a desperate way monkeying with powder. It's a fetching business. In a week, look here, Scarecrow Charlie left his eating-place to go monkeying with powder like the others, and didn't he get a bolt of iron through his brain one morning? Oh, it's very much as if some one had pushed a broom-handle through his skull.

That dark woman from Regina was not dismayed. She ran the eating-place herself. This was a famous place: they heard of this as far West as Regina and they came here to work and eat, attracted by her. She was valuable to the contractors, bringing labor here. Didn't it seem an achievement for a married woman? Still, Rainbow Pete was not remembered after a time; and she was a dark beauty, with a reputation for not saying much.

My, my, these were golden days for Smash McGregor. I ponder over them, thinking what a business he had. He was paid by the contractors to be sorting out arms and legs, putting the short ones together in one box, and the long ones in another, marked with charcoal to be shipped. Oh, they were just gathering up parts of mortals in packing cases, dispatching them to Throat River Landing; and blood was leaking on the decks every way in little lines. They were unlikely consignments.

Then, my friend, there came one night a dark man wearing a red cap and here under his arm he had the instrument with strings. This was the Chief Contractor under the Government in this region. He was rich; at Winnipeg he had stabled many blood horses. Then they were clustering about him at Scarecrow Charlie's, asking him his name. This, he said, was Pal Yachy.

Oh my, now we knew him. This was the man who had given Pete his shape of a rainbow. Didn't it seem an unfortunate thing for him to be coming here? Still he did not know at first that this dark woman standing there was the wife of Rainbow Pete.

He went flashing at her with his teeth, the dark musician. Ay, he was better with the music than Rainbow Pete's old flute. He sang, plucking this instrument, with a jolly face. Heh! Heh! She leaned over the bar, looking at him, and dreaming of the prairies.

Then they told him that this woman was the wife of Rainbow Pete.

"Aha," he said, "but, my friends, a rainbow is not for very long. It is beautiful, but look, it vanishes in air."

Was he afraid, without saying so? That I can not tell you. Still he stayed on Mushrat. He was the destroyer of his countrymen. They blew themselves to pieces in his service, coming in great numbers when he crooked his finger.

Then my friend, he made himself noticeable to that dark woman. He took his instrument to the ledge and sang to her.

This I know from Willis Countryman who lived near that place. He told me that the man sang in the night a soft song and that the woman listened. Ay, she listened in the window, looking down into the valley where Throat River went roaring and the great Falls were like rags waving in the dark. Ay, she sat watching the River come out of the North, where Rainbow Pete was cruising after gold.

This Willis Countryman I'm telling you about was a fine man in his old age for reading. Oh, it was not easy talking to the man, with his muttering and muttering and his chin down firm until the book. When he had his shack on Mouse Island the fire jumped over from the wind-rows they were burning in a right of way. What next? Didn't he put his furs in a canoe to sink in the lee of the island, and there he went on reading in the night with his chin out of water, and the light from his house blazing and lighting up the book in his fist. Oh my, he was great for reading, Willis.

Well, here, one night he came telling me about some queer women on a beach, singing. "Ay! It was impossible to keep away from them while they were at it. What is their name again?"

He made a prolonged effort to remember, sighed painfully, fixed his gaze. I brought him back as if from a fit of epilepsy by the interjection of the word, "Siren."

"Ay," he said, slowly and sadly. "The men put wax in their ears--" Now

mark this. The day after I was hearing this of Willis, the woman put her hand on my arm as I was passing the ledge.

"You are a friend of my husband's," she whispered to me.

"What now?" I said.

"Will he come back to me, I wonder?" she said, looking in the valley.

"This is a long business, searching for gold," I went muttering.

"No man can say I have been unfaithful to him," she said to me, the fierce woman, breathing through her teeth. "I have been speaking to no man."

"This is certain," I said to her.

"If he does not come according to my dream I am a lost woman, by this way of going on," she said to me.

How is this? There were tears flowing on the face, while she was telling me she was bewitched by the singing of Pal Yachy.

Oh, at first she would just lie listening there, but now the man with his sweet voice was drawing her from her bed, to come putting aside the scented bottles and leaning in the window.

Now I said, "My good woman, I am an old man with knowledge of the world. This man is a--what's this again--siren. He has a fatal voice. You must simply put wax in your ears not to hear it when he comes."

What next? Didn't she confess to me that she has listened to him too many times to be deaf to him. No, she must watch the valley when he comes singing his rich song; her cheeks were wet then, and the wind went shaking her. No, this was not a moment for wax. I was an old man. She prevailed upon me to sit outside her window in a chair, watching for him.

"Oh, I am afraid," she whispered to me, "being alone so high out of the valley."

There I sat by night, hearing sounds of thunder below this crag. Pebbles came rattling on the window, the rapid was choked with flying rock. They were growing rich, these madmen monkeying with powder. The government sent them gold in sacks, to pay those who were left for the lives that had been lost.

They were mad; they tumbled champagne out of bottles into tubs, frisking about in it. They had heard that this was done with money.

But Pal Yachy was more foolish. He came singing; oh my, this was a powerful song, ringing against the ledges. This was a fantastic Italian, singing like an angel to the deserted woman. Her eyes were dark; the breast heaved. Oh, these sweet notes were never lost on her.

Now at this time, too, Pal Yachy offered a great prize for the first child to be born on Mushrat. He came grinning under his red cap, saying to us, "There are so many dying, should there not be a prize offered for new life?"

He had learned what manner the woman had of surprising Rainbow Pete. It was a great prize he offered. When the child was born, he stopped the monkeying with powder in the valley for that day, though this too was a great loss in money. The woman pleased him.

Then, my friend, on the night of the day when this child was born, Rainbow Pete came back into the valley. Oh my, it's plain to us, looking at the man under the stars, he has been toughing it. Ay! His beard was tangled, the great bones were rising on his bare chest, his fingers twitched as he was drooping over us. Now I'm telling you his eyes were dim, and the sun had bleached his mustache the color of a lemon. There he stood before us, holding the bag over his shoulder, while he went scratching his bold nose like the picture of a pirate. Still he was gentle in the eye; he was mild in misfortune. Oh, this sailorman was just used to toughing it.

Look here, there he stopped, in the shadow of this great rock I'm speaking of, and these men of Mushrat came asking him if he had made the grade. They were fresh from dipping their carcasses in champagne. They were sparkling men, not accountable to themselves.

"Have you made the grade?" they went bawling to him. This is to say, had he struck gold?

"Oh, there's gold enough," Pete went rumbling at them, "but it's too far to the North, mate. There's no taickle made for getting purchase on it."

"So I am thinking," said the little medicine-man, McGregor. "It lies still at the foot of the rainbow."

"Ay," said Rainbow Pete; but with this word we went thinking of Pal Yachy. Still we did not speak the name of that Italian. No, this would be stronger in the ear of that sailorman than gunpowder in the valley.

"Look you here," said Rainbow Pete. "I am starving. I have not eaten in two days. This is the curse falling on me for hunting gold."

Then they laughed, these mad rockmen, mocking him with their eyes. Their

eyes were twitching; there was powder in the corners of them.

"Are you not master of the eating-place?" they howled at him. "Look, there it stands; is not your wife alone in it?"

"Oh my, oh my, he stood looking at them with a ghastly face. Didn't he seem the casual man? It's as if he had forgotten that woman. He had no memories at all.

"My wife," said the rainbow-man.

"Look," said Shoepack Sam--oh, he remembered treason well--"he is forgetful that he has a wife on Mushrat."

This was so appearedly. There he stood in the blue star-shine, fingering his flute to bring her back to mind. Now, I thought, he will be asking what description of wife is this answering to my name on Mushrat? Oh, man is careless in appointing himself among various women.

Now, my friend, Rainbow Pete, blew a note on his flute to settle the thing clear in his mind. Oh, he was not too brisk in looking up at the black ledge, with the candle in the window. Now he was taken by the knees. This is not the convenient part of a marriage of convenience. No. But Shoepack Sam was waving a hand to us to be telling the man nothing of destiny at that moment.

"Come," he said, "the flute is nothing now. There must be more song than this, by what is going on."

Here he took Rainbow by the elbow, telling him to come and eat at Scarecrow Charlie's, for he will need his strength.

"I am in charge here for the day," said Shoepack.

"How is this?" said Rainbow, whispering.

They went laughing on all sides of him. Oh the demons, they were cackling while he sat devouring a great moose joint, until he was close to braining them with the yellow ball of the joint. He went eating like a timber-wolf from Great Bear.

"This is the palm-tree man," they sang in his ear. "Oh, why is it he grew no cocoanuts stumbling on that lost trail? Isn't it convenient for the man he is married this night?"

Oh, they were full of mischief with him, remembering the secret face he had for them in the days of his experiment.

"Drink this," said Shoepack Sam. There he put champagne in a glass

before him. Oh, they were careful of the man.

"Here, take my hand, and let me see if strength is coming back," said Shoepack. "What is a rainbow without colors?"

Then the little medicine-man took his pulse, kneeling on the floor beside him. Oh, the great sailor was puzzled. Still he drank what was in the glass before him and after this he put his mustache into his mouth, sipping it by chance.

"What is this you are preparing?" he said, pointing his bold nose to them. Oh, the eyes were like a dreamer's: he was a child to appearances.

Then they went speaking to him of the stringed instrument they had heard humming on the ledge, speaking another language than his own.

"This is a wife to be defended," said Shoepack Sam, padding there with his yellow shoepacks bringing another drink. But still there was no word of Pal Yachy. That black Italian was not popular at Throat River.

"Now I see you are speaking of another man," said Rainbow Pete. Then Shoepack Sam went roaring, it was time for honest men to speak, when an honest woman was being taken by a voice.

"Wait," said Rainbow Pete, with his thumb in the foam, "this is unlikely she will want me cruising in, with another man singing in her ear."

Oh my, he was a considerate man, he was a natural husband, thinking of his wife's feelings.

"Are you a man?" said Smash McGregor. "Here she has fed you when you were starving--this is her food you have been eating. Will you pass this ledge, leaving her to fortune?"

Rainbow Pete went putting the edge of the cruiser's ax to his twisted thumb.

"I come to her in my shoes only," he said. "This is not what she will be wanting. I have no gold."

They were shouting to him to have no thought of that, those mad rockmen. There would be gold in plenty. There would be gold. Only go up on the ledge.

"Heard you nothing of the prize?" they bawled to him, the mischief makers. "Oh, there will be no lack of money."

"How is this?" said Rainbow Pete. But they would not be answering him. No! No! They went tumbling him out of Scarecrow Charlie's place, and

making for the ledge with him. Oh my, the mystified man. This was a great shameface he had behind his mustache.

"I am much altered for the worse," he went muttering to us. "She will think nothing of me now."

"There is still time for constancy," said Shoepack Sam. "Do not lose hope."

Then he told them to be quiet, looking up at the dark ledge where the woman lay.

"Old Greyback," said Rainbow Pete, whispering to me, "I am mistrustful of this moment."

"Hist!" said McGregor, "that was the sound of his string. He will be beginning now."

Ay, the voice began. We were wooden men, in rows, listening to this Italian singing here a golden dream between his teeth.

"Who is this man?" said Rainbow Pete. Heh! Heh! Had he not heard this voice before? We were dumb. Oh, this was wild, this was sweet, the long cry of the man over the deep valley. He sang in his throat, saying to the woman there would be no returning. The night was blue. I'm telling you. He was a cunning beggar, Pal Yachy, for making the stars burn in their sockets.

Now I saw him lift his arm to his head, the wicked sailor, listening to the tune of his enemy. Ay, this was the man who had fashioned him in the form of a rainbow. Still he did not know it, dreaming on his feet. He went swaying like a poplar.

Look, I am an old man, but I stood thinking of my airy days. Yes, yes. My brain was heavy. Oh, it was a sweet dagger here twisting in the soul of man. I went picturing the deep snow to me, and the dark spruces of the North; oh, the roses are speaking to me again from this cheek that has been gone from me so long.

Heh! Heh! I should not be speaking of this. It was a sorrowful harp, the voice of that fiend. It was like the wind following the eddy into Lookout Cavern. Now it went choking that great sailor at the throat; look, he was mild, he was a simple man for crying. The tears rolled in his cheek, they sparkled there like the champagne.

Oh my, the song was done.

He was dumb, the great sailor, twisting his mustache.



"Come now," said McGregor, "quick, he will be going into the house."

They were gulls for diving at the ledge; but Rainbow Pete held out his arm, stopping them.

"Stand away," he said, "I will be going into my house with old Greyback here and no other."

This arm was not yet withered he had. No! They stayed in their tracks, as we were going up the ledge.

The door was open of that house; the stringed instrument was laid against it. Ay, the strings were humming still, the song was spinning round like a leaf in the cavern of it; but the black Italian was inside.

Yes, he had gone before into the chamber where she was lying, with his beautiful smile.

The door here was open. Look, by candle-light I saw her lying in a red blanket, staring at the notable singer. Yes, I saw the bottles containing odors standing in a row. There was scent in the room. Now she closed her eyes, this prairie woman, lying under him like death. My friend, there is no doubt she was beautiful upon the pillow without the aid of scented bottles.

Heh! I felt him quiver, this great sailor, when he saw Pal Yachy standing there, but I put my arms about him whispering to him to wait. It was dark where we were, there was a light from the stove only.

Oh my, there the dark Italian was glittering and heaving; he went holding in his fist a canvas sack stamped by the Government, containing the proper weight of gold.

"This is his weight in gold," he said, and there he laid it at her knees. Still her eyes were closed against that demon of a singer, as he went saying, "But now my dear one, there must be no more talk of husbands. Ha! ha! they are like smoke, these husbands. When it has drifted, there must be new fire. So they say in my country."

She lay, not speaking to him, with the sack of gold heavy against her knees.

"Is this plain?" said that Italian. Look now, Rainbow Pete is in his very shadow. Ay, in the shadow of this man who had fashioned him like a rainbow.

"This is a great sum," said Pal Yachy, never looking behind him. "To this must be added the silence of one day in the valley."

"The silence," she went whispering, "the silence."

Ha! ha! this was not so dangerous as song. She was leaning on her elbow, clutching the red blanket to her throat, with her long fingers twisting at the bag. Now my heart stumbled. Oh now, I thought, the gold is heavy against her; this is a misfortunate time to be forsaking her husband, isn't it? Look, the shadow was deeper in the cheek of this sailor. He saw nothing, I fancied, but the gold lying on the blanket.

What next I knew? Here was McGregor in his yellow skull, whispering,

"Is this the gold then at the foot of the rainbow? This is fool's gold where the heart is concerned."

Then, my friend, she threw it clear of the bed. Ay! I heard it falling on the ledge there, but at this time she did not know that Rainbow Pete was in the room.

When she had thrown it, then she saw him, standing behind that demon of a singer. Her eyes were strange then. By the expression of her eyes Pal Yachy saw that he was doomed. He was like a frozen man.

"Wait now," said Rainbow Pete, "am I in my house here?"

"Am I not your wife?" cried the dark woman from Regina.

Oh, the pleasant sailor. The song had touched him.

"Look now," he said to Pal Yachy, "you made a rainbow of me in the beginning. Do you bring gold here now to plant at my feet, generous man?"

My, my, this fantastic Italian knew that words were wasted now. He was like a snake with his sting. But Rainbow Pete was not an easy man. He broke the arm with one twist, look, the knife went spinning on the ledge. And at this moment the blasting in the rock began again below the ledge. They were at it again, monkeying with powder. Oh, it was death they were speaking to down there. It was like a battle between giants going on, there were thunders and red gleams in the black valley; and the candle-flame went shivering with the great noises.

"Here," said Rainbow Pete, "I will scatter you like the rocks of the valley."

Oh, the righteous man. Isn't it a strange consideration, the voice of Pal Yachy moving this crooked sailor to good deeds? Ay! He was a noble man, hurling the Italian from the house by his ears. Oh, it's a circumstance to be puzzling over. He threw the gold after him. Ay, the gold after--like dirt; and here the clothes hung loose on his own body

where he had been starving in the search for bags like that.

Now, as he went kneeling by his wife, he discovered his son, by the crowing under the blanket.

"Look here at the little nipper, old Greyback," he said, "come a little way into the room. Look now, at the fat back for putting a little palm-tree on, while he is young. This is truth, old fellow, here is true gold lying at the foot of the rainbow, according to the prophecy."

Our old friend stopped to breathe and blink.

"He had staked this claim but he had never worked it," he said solemnly. But isn't it strange, the same man who had been fashioning him like a rainbow, should be pointing out the gold to him. Oh, there's no doubt Pal Yachy was defeated in the end by his own voice--

He went away that night, leaving all to the sub-contractors. Heh! He was not seen on Mushrat again. Still he had a remarkable voice. Many times afterward I have heard Rainbow Pete playing on his flute--this is in the evening when the ledge is quiet--but this is not the same thing. No, no, he could never bewitch her with his music, she must love him for his intention only, to be charming her. Ay! This is safer.

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Two works from  
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## THE OLD CANE MILL

By Nellie Gregg Tomlinson

"What's sorghum?" Don't you know sorghum?  
My gran'son nigh sixteen,  
Don't boys know nothin' nowadays?  
Beats all I ever seen.  
Why sorghum's the bulliest stuff  
Wuz ever made ter eat.  
You spread it thick on homemade bread;  
It's most oncommon sweet.

"Come from?" Wall yer jist better bet  
It don't come from no can.  
Jus' b'iled down juice from sorghum cane,  
Straight I'way 'lasses bran'.  
"What's cane?" It's some like corn, yer know,  
An' topped with plumes o' seed.  
Grows straight an' tall on yaller clay

That wouldn't grow a weed.

Long in September when 'twuz ripe,  
The cane-patch battle field  
Wuz charged by boys with wooden swords,  
Good temper wuz their shield.  
They stripped the stalks of all their leaves,  
Then men, with steel knives keen  
Slashed off the heads and cut the stalks  
An' piled them straight an' clean.

The tops wuz saved ter feed the hens,  
Likewise fer nex' year's seed.  
The farmer allus has ter save  
Against the futur's need.  
The neighbors cum from miles erbout  
An' fetched the cane ter mill.  
They stacked it high betwixt two trees,  
At Gran'dads, on the hill.

An' ol' hoss turned the cane mill sweep,  
He led hisself erroun.  
The stalks wuz fed inter the press,  
From them the sap wuz groun'.  
This juice run through a little trough  
Ter pans beneath a shed;  
There it wuz b'iled an' skimmed and b'iled,  
Till it wuz thick an' red.

Then it wuz cooled an' put in bar'ls  
An' toted off to town  
While us kids got ter lick the pan,  
Which job wuz dun up brown.  
Gee whiz! but we did hev good times  
At taffy pullin' bees.  
We woun' the taffy roun' girls' necks--  
Bob wuz the biggest tease.

Inside the furnace, on live coals,  
We het cane stalks red hot,  
Then hit 'em hard out on the groun'--  
Yer oughter hear 'em pop!  
Sometimes a barefoot boy would step  
Inter the skimmin's hole,  
Er pinch his fingers in the mill,  
Er fall off from the pole.

When winter winds went whis'lin' through  
The door an' winder cracks,

An' piled up snow wuz driftin'  
Till yer couldn't see yer tracks,  
Then we all drawed roun' the table  
An' passed the buckwheat cakes,  
Er mebbe it wuz good corn bread.  
"What's sorghum?" Good lan' sakes.

Wall, son, yer hev my symperthy;  
Yer've missed a lot, I swan.  
Oh, sure yer dance an' joy-ride  
Frum ev'nin' untel dawn,  
Yer've football, skates an' golf ter he'p  
The passin' time ter kill,  
But give me mem'ry's boyhood days,  
Erroun' the ol' cane mill.

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## THE QUEER LITTLE THING

By Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd

Bonita Allen was a queer little thing. Everyone in the school, from Miss Ryder down to the chambermaid, had made remarks to that effect before the child had spent forty-eight hours in the house, yet no one seemed able to give a convincing reason for the general impression.

The new pupil was quiet, docile, moderately well dressed, fairly good looking. She did nothing extraordinary. In fact, she effaced herself as far as possible; yet from the first she caused a ripple in the placid current of the school, and her personality was distinctly felt.

"I think it's her eyes," hazarded Belinda, as she and Miss Barnes discussed the new-comer in the Youngest Teacher's room. "They aren't girl eyes at all."

"Fine eyes," asserted the teacher of mathematics with her usual curtness.

Belinda nodded emphatic assent. "Yes, of course; beautiful, but so big and pathetic and dumb. I feel ridiculously apologetic every time the child looks at me, and as for punishing her--I'd as soon shoot a deer at six paces. It's all wrong. A twelve-year-old girl hasn't any right to eyes like those. If the youngster is unhappy she ought to cry twenty-five handkerchiefs full of tears, as Evangeline Marie did when she came, and then get over it. And if she's happy she ought to smile

with her eyes as well as with her lips. I can't stand self-repression in children."

"She'll be all right when she has been here longer and begins to feel at home," said Miss Barnes. But Belinda shook her head doubtfully as she went down to superintend study hour.

Seated at her desk in the big schoolroom she looked idly along the rows of girlish heads until she came to one bent stoically over a book. The new pupil was not fidgeting like her comrades. Apparently her every thought was concentrated upon the book before her. Her elbows were on her desk, and one lean little brown hand supported the head, whose masses of straight black hair were parted in an unerring white line and fell in two heavy braids. The face framed in the smooth shining hair was lean as the hand, yet held no suggestion of ill-health. It was clean cut, almost to sharpness, brown with the brownness that comes from wind and sun, oddly firm about chin and lips, high of cheekbones, straight of nose.

As Belinda looked two dark eyes were raised from the book and met her own--sombre eyes with a hurt in them--and an uncomfortable lump rose in the Youngest Teacher's throat. She smiled at the sad little face, but the smile was not a merry one. In some unaccountable way it spoke of the sympathetic lump in her throat, and the Queer Little Thing seemed to read the message, for the ghost of an answering smile flickered in the brown depths before the lids dropped over them.

When study hour was over the Youngest Teacher moved hastily to the door, with some vague idea of following up the successful smile, and establishing diplomatic relations with the new girl; but she was not quick enough. Bonita had slipped into the hall and hurried up the stair toward the shelter of her own room.

Shrugging her shoulders, Belinda turned toward the door of Miss Ryder's study and knocked.

"Come in."

The voice was not encouraging. Miss Lucilla objected to interruptions in the late evening hours, when she relaxed from immaculately fitted black silk to the undignified folds of a violet dressing gown.

When she recognized the intruder she thawed perceptibly.

"Oh, Miss Carewe! Come in. Nothing wrong, is there?"

Belinda dropped into a chair with a whimsical sigh.

"Nothing wrong except my curiosity. Miss Ryder, do tell me something

about that Allen child."

Miss Lucilla eyed her subordinate questioningly.

"What has she been doing?"

"Nothing at all. I wish she would do something. It's what she doesn't do, and looks capable of doing, that bothers me. There's simply no getting at her. She's from Texas, isn't she?"

The principal regarded attentively one of the grapes she was eating, and there was an interval of silence.

"She is a queer little thing," Miss Lucilla admitted at last. "Yes, she's from Texas, but that's no reason why she should be odd. We've had a number of young ladies from Texas, and they were quite like other school girls only more so. Just between you and me, Miss Carewe, I think it must be the child's Indian blood that makes her seem different."

"Indian?" Belinda sat up, sniffing romance in the air.

"Yes, her father mentioned the strain quite casually when he wrote. It's rather far back in the family, but he seemed to think it might account for the girl's intense love for nature and dislike of conventions. Mrs. Allen died when the baby was born, and the father has brought the child up on a ranch. He's completely wrapped up in her, but he finally realized that she needed to be with women. He's worth several millions and he wants to educate her so that she'll enjoy the money--'be a fine lady,' as he puts it. I confess his description of the girl disturbed me at first, but he was so liberal in regard to terms that----"

Miss Lucilla left the sentence in the air and meditatively ate another bunch of grapes.

"Did her father come up with her?" Belinda asked.

"No, he sent her with friends who happened to be coming--highly respectable couple, but breezy, very breezy. They told me that Bonita could ride any broncho on the ranch and could shoot a jack-rabbit on the run. They seemed to think she would be a great addition to our school circle on that account. Personally I'm much relieved to find her so tractable and quiet, but I've noticed something--well--unusual about her."

As Belinda went up to bed she met a slim little figure in a barbaric red and yellow dressing gown crossing the hall. There was a shy challenge in the serious child face, although the little feet, clad in

soft beaded moccasins, quickened their steps; and Belinda answered the furtive friendliness by slipping an arm around the girl's waist and drawing her into the tiny hall bedroom.

"You haven't been to see me. It's one of the rules that every girl shall have a cup of cocoa with me before she has been here three evenings," she said laughingly.

The Queer Little Thing accepted the overture soberly and, curled up in the one big chair, watched the teacher in silence.

The cocoa was soon under way. Then the hostess turned and smiled frankly at her guest. Belinda's smile is a reassuring thing.

"Homesick business, isn't it?" she said abruptly, with a warm note of comradeship in her voice.

The tense little figure in the big chair leaned forward with sudden, swift confidence.

"I'm going home," announced Bonita in a tone that made no reservations.

Belinda received the news without the quiver of an eyelash or a sign of incredulity.

"When?" she asked with interest warm enough to invite confession and not emphatic enough to rouse distrust.

"I don't know just when, but I have to go. I can't stand it and I've written to Daddy. He'll understand. Nobody here knows. They're all used to it. They've always lived in houses like this, with little back yards that have high walls around them, and sidewalks and streets right outside the front windows, and crowds of strange people going by all the time, and just rules, rules, rules, everywhere. Everybody has so many manners, and they talk about things I don't know anything about, and nobody would understand if I talked about the real things."

"Perhaps I'll understand a little bit," murmured Belinda. The Queer Little Thing put out one hand and touched the Youngest Teacher's knee gently in a shy, caressing fashion.

"No, you wouldn't understand, because you don't know; but you could learn. The others couldn't. The prairie wouldn't talk to them and they'd be lonesome--the way I am here. Dick says you have got to learn the language when you are little, or else have a gift for such languages, but that when you've once learned it you don't care to hear any other."



"Who's Dick?" Belinda asked.

"Dick? Oh he's just Dick. He taught me to ride and to shoot, and he used to read poetry to me, and he told me stories about everything. He used to go to a big school called Harvard, but he was lonesome there--the way I am here."

"The way I am here" dropped into the talk like a persistent refrain, and there was heartache in it.

"I want to go home," the child went on. Now that the dam of silence was down the pent-up feeling rushed out tumultuously. "I want to see Daddy and the boys and the horses and the cattle, and I want to watch the sun go down over the edge of the world, not just tumble down among the dirty houses, and I want to gallop over the prairie where there aren't any roads, and smell the grass and watch the birds and the sky. You ought to see the sky down there at night, Miss Carewe. It's so big and black and soft and full of bright stars, and you can see clear to where it touches the ground all around you, and there's a night breeze that's cool as cool, and the boys all play their banjos and guitars and sing, and Daddy and I sit over on our veranda and listen. There's only a little narrow strip of sky with two or three stars in it out of my window here, and it's so noisy and cluttered out in the back yards--and I hate walking in a procession on the ugly old streets, and doing things when bells ring. I hate it. I hate it."

Her voice hadn't risen at all, had only grown more and more vibrant with passionate rebellion. The sharp little face was drawn and pale, but there were no tears in the big tragic eyes.

Belinda had consoled many homesick little girls, but this was a different problem.

"I'm sorry," she said softly. "Don't you think It will be easier after a while?"

The small girl with the old face shook her head.

"No, it won't. It isn't in me to like all this. I'm so sorry, because Daddy wants me to be a lady. He said it was as hard for him to send me as it was for me to come, but that I couldn't learn to be a lady with lots of money to spend down there with only boys and him. There wasn't any lady there on the ranch at all, except Mammy Lou, the cook, and she didn't have lots of money to spend, so she wasn't the kind he meant. I thought I'd come and try, but I didn't know it would be like this. I don't want to be a lady, Miss Carewe. I don't believe they can be very happy. I've seen them in carriages and they don't look very happy. You're nice. I like you, and I'm most sure Daddy and Dick and the boys would like you, but then you haven't got lots of money, have

you? And you were born up here and you don't know any better anyway. I'm going home."

The burst of confidence ended where it had begun. She was going home, and she was so firm in the faith that Belinda, listening, believed her.

"But if your father says no?"

The dark little face was quiet again, all but the great eyes.

"I'll have to go," the Queer Little Thing slowly said.

Four days later Miss Lucilla Ryder called the Youngest Teacher into the study.

"Miss Carewe, I'm puzzled about this little Miss Allen. I had a letter from her father this morning. He says that she has written that she is very homesick and unhappy and doesn't want to stay. He feels badly about it, of course, but he very wisely leaves the matter in our hands--says he realizes she'll have to be homesick and he'll have to be lonesome if she's to be a lady. But he wants us to do all we can to make her contented. He very generously sends a check for five hundred dollars, which we are to use for any extra expense incurred in entertaining her and making her happy. Now, I thought you might take her to the theater and the art museum, and the--a--the aquarium, and introduce her to the pleasures and advantages of city life. She'll soon be all right."

With sinking heart Belinda went in search of the girl. She found her practicing five-finger exercises drearily in one of the music-rooms. As Belinda entered the child looked up and met the friendly, sympathetic eyes. A mute appeal sprang into her own eyes, and Belinda understood. The thing was too bad to be talked about, and the Youngest Teacher said no word about the homesickness or the expected letter. In this way she clinched her friendship with the Queer Little Thing.

But, following the principal's orders, she endeavored to demonstrate to Bonita the joy and blessedness of life in New York. The child went, quietly wherever she was taken--a mute, pathetic little figure to whom the aquarium fish and the Old Masters and the latest matinee idol were all one--and unimportant. The other girls envied her her privileges and her pocket-money, but they did not understand. No one understood save Belinda, and she did her cheerful best to blot out old loves with new impressions; but from the first she felt in her heart that she was elected to failure. The child was fond of her, always respectful, always docile, always grave. Nothing brought a light into her eyes or a spontaneous smile to her lips. Anyone save Belinda would have grown impatient, angry. She only grew more tender--and more troubled. Day by

day she watched the sad little face grow thinner. It was pale now, instead of brown, and the high cheek bones were strikingly prominent. The lips pressed closely together drooped plaintively at the corners and the big eyes were more full of shadow than ever; but the child made no protest or plea, and by tacit consent she and Belinda ignored their first conversation and never mentioned Texas.

Often Belinda made up her mind to put aside the restraint and talk freely as she would to any other girl, but there was something about the little Texan that forbade liberties, warned off intruders, and the Youngest Teacher feared losing what little ground she had gained.

Finally she went in despair to Miss Ryder.

"The Indian character is too much for me," she confessed with a groan half humorous, half earnest. "I give it up."

"What's the matter?" asked Miss Ryder.

"Well, I've dragged poor Bonita Allen all over the borough of Manhattan and the Bronx and spent many ducats in the process. She has been very polite about it, but just as sad over Sherry's tea hour as over Grant's tomb, and just as cheerful over the Cesnola collection as over the monkey cages at the Zoo. The poor little thing is so unhappy and miserable that she looks like a wild animal in a trap, and I think the best we can do with her is to send her home.

"Nonsense," said Miss Lucilla. "Her father is paying eighteen hundred dollars a year."

Belinda was defiant.

"I don't care. He ought to take her home."

"Miss Carewe, you are sentimentalizing. One would think you had never seen a homesick girl before."

"She's different from other girls."

"I'll talk with her myself," said Miss Lucilla sternly.

She did, but the situation remained unchanged, and when she next mentioned the Texan problem to Belinda, Miss Lucilla was less positive in her views.

"She's a very strange child, but we must do what we can to carry out her father's wishes."

"I'd send her home," said Belinda.

It was shortly after this that Katherine Holland, who sat beside Bonita at the table, confided to Belinda that that funny little Allen girl didn't eat a thing. The waitress came to Belinda with the same tale, and the Youngest Teacher sought out Bonita and reasoned with her.

"You really must eat, my dear," she urged.

"Why?"

"You'll be ill if you don't."

"How soon?"

Belinda looked dazed.

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"How soon will I be sick?"

"Very soon, I'm afraid," the puzzled teacher answered.

"That's good. I don't feel as if I could wait much longer."

Belinda gasped.

"Do you mean to say you want to be ill?"

"If I get very sick Daddy will come for me."

The teacher looked helplessly at the quiet, great-eyed child, then launched into expostulation, argument, entreaty.

Bonita listened politely and was profoundly unimpressed.

"It's wicked, dear child. It would make your father wretchedly unhappy."

"He'd be awfully unhappy if he understood, anyway. He thinks I'm not really unhappy and that it's his duty to keep me here and make a lady of me, no matter how lonely he is without me. He wrote me so--but I know he'd be terribly glad if he had a real excuse for taking me home."

Belinda exhausted her own resources and appealed to Miss Lucilla, who stared incredulously over her nose-glasses and sent for Bonita.

After the interview she called for the Youngest Teacher, and the two

failures looked at each other helplessly.

"It's an extraordinary thing," said Miss Lucilla in her most magisterial tone--"a most extraordinary thing. In all my experience I've seen nothing like it. Nothing seems to make the slightest impression upon the child. She's positively crazy."

"You will tell her father to send for her, won't you?"

Miss Lucilla shook her head stubbornly.

"Not at all. It would be the ruination of the child to give in to her whims and bad temper now. If she won't listen to reason she must be allowed to pay for her foolishness. When she gets hungry enough she will eat. It's a shame to talk about a child of twelve having the stoicism to starve herself into an illness just because she is homesick at boarding-school."

Belinda came back to her thread-worn argument.

"But Bonita is different, Miss Ryder."

"She's a very stubborn, selfish child," said Miss Ryder resentfully, and turning to her desk she changed the conversation.

Despite discipline, despite pleadings, despite cajolery, Bonita stood firm. Eat she would not, and when, on her way to class one morning the scrap of humanity with the set lips and the purple shadows round her eyes fainted quietly, Belinda felt that a masterly inactivity had ceased to be a virtue.

James, the house man, carried the girl upstairs, and the Youngest Teacher put her to bed, where she opened her eyes to look unseeingly at Belinda and then closed them wearily and lay quite still, a limp little creature whose pale face looked pitifully thin and lifeless against the white pillow. The Queer Little Thing's wish had been fulfilled and illness had come without long delay.

For a moment Belinda looked down at the girl. Then she turned and went swiftly to Miss Ryder's study, her eyes blazing, her mouth so stern that Amelia Bowers, who met her on the stairs, hurried to spread the news that Miss Carewe "was perfectly hopping mad about something."

Once in the presence of the August One the little teacher lost no time in parley.

"Miss Ryder," she said crisply--and at the tone her employer looked up in amazement--"I've told you about Bonita Allen. I've been to you again and again about her. You knew that she was fretting her heart

out and half sick, and then you knew that for several days she hasn't been eating a thing. I tried to make you understand that the matter was serious and that something radical needed to be done, but you insisted that the child would come around all right and that we mustn't give in to her. I begged you to send for her father and you said it wasn't necessary. I'm here to take your orders, Miss Ryder, but I can't stand this sort of thing. I know the girl better than any of the rest of you do, and I know it isn't badness that makes her act so. Now she is ill--really ill. I've just put her to bed, and honestly, Miss Ryder, if we don't send for her father we'll have a tragedy on our hands. It sounds foolish, but it is true. If nobody else telegraphs to Mr. Allen I am going to do it."

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When the doctor came there were bright red spots on the Queer Little Thing's cheeks, and she was babbling incoherently about prairie flowers and horses and Dick and Daddy.

Meanwhile a telegram had gone to Daddy and the messenger who delivered it heard a volume of picturesque comment that was startling even on a Texas ranch.

"Am coming," ran the answering dispatch received by Miss Ryder that night; but it was not until morning that Bonita was able to understand the news.

"He's scared, but I know he's glad," she said and she swallowed without a murmur the broth against which even in her delirium she had fought.

One evening, three days later, a hansom dashed up to the school and out jumped a tall, square-shouldered man in a wide-brimmed hat, and clothes that bore only a family resemblance to the clothing of the New York millionaires, though they were good clothes in their own free-and-easy way.

A loud, hearty voice inquiring for "My baby" made itself heard even in the sickroom, and a sudden light flashed into the little patient's eyes--a light that was an illumination and a revelation.

"Daddy," she said wearily, and the word was a heart-throb.

Mr. Allen wasted no time in a polite interview with Miss Ryder. Hypnotized by his masterfulness, the servant led him directly up to the sick-room and opened the door.

The man filled the room; a high breeze seemed to come with him, and vitality flowed from him in tangible waves. Belinda smiled, but there

were tears in her eyes, for the big man's heart was in his face.

"Baby!"

"Daddy!"

Belinda remembered an errand downstairs.

When she returned the big Texan was sitting on the side of the bed with both the lean little hands in one of his big brawny ones, while his other hand awkwardly smoothed the straight black hair.

"When will you take me home, Daddy?" said the child with the shining eyes.

"As soon as you're strong enough, Honey. The boys wanted me to let them charge New York in a bunch and get you. It's been mighty lonesome on that ranch. I wish to heaven I'd never been fool enough to let you come away."

He turned to Belinda with a quizzical smile sitting oddly on his anxious face.

"I reckon she might as well go, miss. I sent her to a finishing school, and by thunder, she's just about finished."

There was a certain hint of pride in his voice as he added reflectively:

"I might have known if she said she'd have to come home she meant it. Harder to change her mind than to bust any broncho I ever tackled. Queer Little Thing, Baby is."

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## CROWNED HEADS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Man with Two Left Feet*, by P. G. Wodehouse

Katie had never been more surprised in her life than when the serious young man with the brown eyes and the Charles Dana Gibson profile spirited her away from his friend and Genevieve. Till that moment she had looked on herself as playing a sort of 'villager and retainer' part to the brown-eyed young man's hero and Genevieve's heroine. She knew she was not pretty, though somebody (unidentified) had once said that she had nice eyes; whereas Genevieve was notoriously a beauty, incessantly pestered, so report had it, by musical comedy managers to

go on the stage.

Genevieve was tall and blonde, a destroyer of masculine peace of mind. She said 'harf' and 'rahther', and might easily have been taken for an English duchess instead of a cloak-model at Macey's. You would have said, in short, that, in the matter of personable young men, Genevieve would have swept the board. Yet, here was this one deliberately selecting her, Katie, for his companion. It was almost a miracle.

He had managed it with the utmost dexterity at the merry-go-round. With winning politeness he had assisted Genevieve on her wooden steed, and then, as the machinery began to work, had grasped Katie's arm and led her at a rapid walk out into the sunlight. Katie's last glimpse of Genevieve had been the sight of her amazed and offended face as it whizzed round the corner, while the steam melodeon drowned protests with a spirited plunge into 'Alexander's Ragtime Band'.

Katie felt shy. This young man was a perfect stranger. It was true she had had a formal introduction to him, but only from Genevieve, who had scraped acquaintance with him exactly two minutes previously. It had happened on the ferry-boat on the way to Palisades Park. Genevieve's bright eye, roving among the throng on the lower deck, had singled out this young man and his companion as suitable cavaliers for the expedition. The young man pleased her, and his friend, with the broken nose and the face like a good-natured bulldog, was obviously suitable for Katie.

Etiquette is not rigid on New York ferry-boats. Without fuss or delay she proceeded to make their acquaintance--to Katie's concern, for she could never get used to Genevieve's short way with strangers. The quiet life she had led had made her almost prudish, and there were times when Genevieve's conduct shocked her. Of course, she knew there was no harm in Genevieve. As the latter herself had once put it, 'The feller that tries to get gay with me is going to get a call-down that'll make him holler for his winter overcoat.' But all the same she could not approve. And the net result of her disapproval was to make her shy and silent as she walked by this young man's side.

The young man seemed to divine her thoughts.

'Say, I'm on the level,' he observed. 'You want to get that. Right on the square. See?'

'Oh, yes,' said Katie, relieved but yet embarrassed. It was awkward to have one's thoughts read like this.

'You ain't like your friend. Don't think I don't see that.'

'Genevieve's a sweet girl,' said Katie, loyally.



'A darned sight too sweet. Somebody ought to tell her mother.'

'Why did you speak to her if you did not like her?'

'Wanted to get to know you,' said the young man simply.

They walked on in silence. Katie's heart was beating with a rapidity that forbade speech. Nothing like this very direct young man had ever happened to her before. She had grown so accustomed to regarding herself as something too insignificant and unattractive for the notice of the lordly male that she was overwhelmed. She had a vague feeling that there was a mistake somewhere. It surely could not be she who was proving so alluring to this fairy prince. The novelty of the situation frightened her.

'Come here often?' asked her companion.

'I've never been here before.'

'Often go to Coney?'

'I've never been.'

He regarded her with astonishment.

'You've never been to Coney Island! Why, you don't know what this sort of thing is till you've taken in Coney. This place isn't on the map with Coney. Do you mean to say you've never seen Luna Park, or Dreamland, or Steeplechase, or the diving ducks? Haven't you had a look at the Mardi Gras stunts? Why, Coney during Mardi Gras is the greatest thing on earth. It's a knockout. Just about a million boys and girls having the best time that ever was. Say, I guess you don't go out much, do you?'

'Not much.'

'If it's not a rude question, what do you do? I been trying to place you all along. Now I reckon your friend works in a store, don't she?'

'Yes. She's a cloak-model. She has a lovely figure, hasn't she?'

'Didn't notice it. I guess so, if she's what you say. It's what they pay her for, ain't it? Do you work in a store, too?'

'Not exactly. I keep a little shop.'

'All by yourself?'

'I do all the work now. It was my father's shop, but he's dead. It began by being my grandfather's. He started it. But he's so old now that, of course, he can't work any longer, so I look after things.'

'Say, you're a wonder! What sort of a shop?'

'It's only a little second-hand bookshop. There really isn't much to do.'

'Where is it?'

'Sixth Avenue. Near Washington Square.'

'What name?'

'Bennett.'

'That's your name, then?'

'Yes.'

'Anything besides Bennett?'

'My name's Kate.'

The young man nodded.

'I'd make a pretty good district attorney,' he said, disarming possible resentment at this cross-examination. 'I guess you're wondering if I'm ever going to stop asking you questions. Well, what would you like to do?'

'Don't you think we ought to go back and find your friend and Genevieve? They will be wondering where we are.'

'Let 'em,' said the young man briefly. 'I've had all I want of Jenny.'

'I can't understand why you don't like her.'

'I like you. Shall we have some ice-cream, or would you rather go on the Scenic Railway?'

Katie decided on the more peaceful pleasure. They resumed their walk, socially licking two cones. Out of the corner of her eyes Katie cast swift glances at her friend's face. He was a very grave young man. There was something important as well as handsome about him. Once, as they made their way through the crowds, she saw a couple of boys look almost reverently at him. She wondered who he could be, but was too shy to inquire. She had got over her nervousness to a great extent, but

there were still limits to what she felt herself equal to saying. It did not strike her that it was only fair that she should ask a few questions in return for those which he had put. She had always repressed herself, and she did so now. She was content to be with him without finding out his name and history.

He supplied the former just before he finally consented to let her go.

They were standing looking over the river. The sun had spent its force, and it was cool and pleasant in the breeze which was coming up the Hudson. Katie was conscious of a vague feeling that was almost melancholy. It had been a lovely afternoon, and she was sorry that it was over.

The young man shuffled his feet on the loose stones.

'I'm mighty glad I met you,' he said. 'Say, I'm coming to see you. On Sixth Avenue. Don't mind, do you?'

He did not wait for a reply.

'Brady's my name. Ted Brady, Glencoe Athletic Club,' he paused. 'I'm on the level,' he added, and paused again. 'I like you a whole lot. There's your friend, Genevieve. Better go after her, hadn't you? Good-bye.' And he was gone, walking swiftly through the crowd about the bandstand.

Katie went back to Genevieve, and Genevieve was simply horrid. Cold and haughty, a beautiful iceberg of dudgeon, she refused to speak a single word during the whole long journey back to Sixth Avenue. And Katie, whose tender heart would at other times have been tortured by this hostility, leant back in her seat, and was happy. Her mind was far away from Genevieve's frozen gloom, living over again the wonderful happenings of the afternoon.

Yes, it had been a wonderful afternoon, but trouble was waiting for her in Sixth Avenue. Trouble was never absent for very long from Katie's unselfish life. Arriving at the little bookshop, she found Mr Murdoch, the glazier, preparing for departure. Mr Murdoch came in on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to play draughts with her grandfather, who was paralysed from the waist, and unable to leave the house except when Katie took him for his outing in Washington Square each morning in his bath-chair.

Mr Murdoch welcomed Katie with joy.

'I was wondering whenever you would come back, Katie. I'm afraid the old man's a little upset.'

'Not ill?'

'Not ill. Upset. And it was my fault, too. Thinking he'd be interested, I read him a piece from the paper where I seen about these English Suffragettes, and he just went up in the air. I guess he'll be all right now you've come back. I was a fool to read it, I reckon. I kind of forgot for the moment.'

'Please don't worry yourself about it, Mr Murdoch. He'll be all right soon. I'll go to him.'

In the inner room the old man was sitting. His face was flushed, and he gesticulated from time to time.

'I won't have it,' he cried as Katie entered. 'I tell you I won't have it. If Parliament can't do anything, I'll send Parliament about its business.'

'Here I am, grandpapa,' said Katie quickly. 'I've had the greatest time. It was lovely up there. I--'

'I tell you it's got to stop. I've spoken about it before. I won't have it.'

'I expect they're doing their best. It's your being so far away that makes it hard for them. But I do think you might write them a very sharp letter.'

'I will. I will. Get out the paper. Are you ready?' He stopped, and looked piteously at Katie. 'I don't know what to say. I don't know how to begin.'

Katie scribbled a few lines.

'How would this do? "His Majesty informs his Government that he is greatly surprised and indignant that no notice has been taken of his previous communications. If this goes on, he will be reluctantly compelled to put the matter in other hands."'

She read it glibly as she had written it. The formula had been a favourite one of her late father, when roused to fall upon offending patrons of the bookshop.

The old man beamed. His resentment was gone. He was soothed and happy.

'That'll wake 'em up,' he said. 'I won't have these goings on while I'm king, and if they don't like it, they know what to do. You're a good girl, Katie.'

He chuckled.

'I beat Lord Murdoch five games to nothing,' he said.

It was now nearly two years since the morning when old Matthew Bennett had announced to an audience consisting of Katie and a smoky blue cat, which had wandered in from Washington Square to take pot-luck, that he was the King of England.

This was a long time for any one delusion of the old man's to last. Usually they came and went with a rapidity which made it hard for Katie, for all her tact, to keep abreast of them. She was not likely to forget the time when he went to bed President Roosevelt and woke up the Prophet Elijah. It was the only occasion in all the years they had passed together when she had felt like giving way and indulging in the fit of hysterics which most girls of her age would have had as a matter of course.

She had handled that crisis, and she handled the present one with equal smoothness. When her grandfather made his announcement, which he did rather as one stating a generally recognized fact than as if the information were in any way sensational, she neither screamed nor swooned, nor did she rush to the neighbours for advice. She merely gave the old man his breakfast, not forgetting to set aside a suitable portion for the smoky cat, and then went round to notify Mr Murdoch of what had happened.

Mr Murdoch, excellent man, received the news without any fuss or excitement at all, and promised to look in on Schwartz, the stout saloon-keeper, who was Mr Bennett's companion and antagonist at draughts on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and, as he expressed it, put him wise.

Life ran comfortably in the new groove. Old Mr Bennett continued to play draughts and pore over his second-hand classics. Every morning he took his outing in Washington Square where, from his invalid's chair, he surveyed somnolent Italians and roller-skating children with his old air of kindly approval. Katie, whom circumstances had taught to be thankful for small mercies, was perfectly happy in the shadow of the throne. She liked her work; she liked looking after her grandfather; and now that Ted Brady had come into her life, she really began to look on herself as an exceptionally lucky girl, a spoilt favourite of Fortune.

For Ted Brady had called, as he said he would, and from the very first he had made plain in his grave, direct way the objects of his visits. There was no subtlety about Ted, no finesse. He was as frank as a music-hall love song.

On his first visit, having handed Katie a large bunch of roses with the

stolidity of a messenger boy handing over a parcel, he had proceeded, by way of establishing his *\_bona fides\_*, to tell her all about himself. He supplied the facts in no settled order, just as they happened to occur to him in the long silences with which his speech was punctuated. Small facts jostled large facts. He spoke of his morals and his fox-terrier in the same breath.

'I'm on the level. Ask anyone who knows me. They'll tell you that. Say, I got the cutest little dog you ever seen. Do you like dogs? I've never been a fellow that's got himself mixed up with girls. I don't like 'em as a general thing. A fellow's got too much to do keeping himself in training, if his club expects him to do things. I belong to the Glencoe Athletic. I ran the hundred yards dash in evens last sports there was. They expect me to do it at the Glencoe, so I've never got myself mixed up with girls. Till I seen you that afternoon I reckon I'd hardly looked at a girl, honest. They didn't seem to kind of make any hit with me. And then I seen you, and I says to myself, "That's the one." It sort of came over me in a flash. I fell for you directly I seen you. And I'm on the level. Don't forget that.'

And more in the same strain, leaning on the counter and looking into Katie's eyes with a devotion that added emphasis to his measured speech.

Next day he came again, and kissed her respectfully but firmly, making a sort of shuffling dive across the counter. Breaking away, he fumbled in his pocket and produced a ring, which he proceeded to place on her finger with the serious air which accompanied all his actions.

'That looks pretty good to me,' he said, as he stepped back and eyed it.

It struck Katie, when he had gone, how differently different men did things. Genevieve had often related stories of men who had proposed to her, and according to Genevieve, they always got excited and emotional, and sometimes cried. Ted Brady had fitted her with the ring more like a glover's assistant than anything else, and he had hardly spoken a word from beginning to end. He had seemed to take her acquiescence for granted. And yet there had been nothing flat or disappointing about the proceedings. She had been thrilled throughout. It is to be supposed that Mr Brady had the force of character which does not require the aid of speech.

It was not till she took the news of her engagement to old Mr Bennett that it was borne in upon Katie that Fate did not intend to be so wholly benevolent to her as she supposed.

That her grandfather could offer any opposition had not occurred to her as a possibility. She took his approval for granted. Never, as long as

she could remember, had he been anything but kind to her. And the only possible objections to marriage from a grandfather's point of view--badness of character, insufficient means, or inferiority of social position--were in this case gloriously absent.

She could not see how anyone, however hypercritical, could find a flaw in Ted. His character was spotless. He was comfortably off. And so far from being in any way inferior socially, it was he who condescended. For Ted, she had discovered from conversation with Mr Murdoch, the glazier, was no ordinary young man. He was a celebrity. So much so that for a moment, when told the news of the engagement, Mr Murdoch, startled out of his usual tact, had exhibited frank surprise that the great Ted Brady should not have aimed higher.

'You're sure you've got the name right, Katie?' he had said. 'It's really Ted Brady? No mistake about the first name? Well-built, good-looking young chap with brown eyes? Well, this beats me. Not,' he went on hurriedly, 'that any young fellow mightn't think himself lucky to get a wife like you, Katie, but Ted Brady! Why, there isn't a girl in this part of the town, or in Harlem or the Bronx, for that matter, who wouldn't give her eyes to be in your place. Why, Ted Brady is the big noise. He's the star of the Glencoe.'

'He told me he belonged to the Glencoe Athletic.'

'Don't you believe it. It belongs to him. Why, the way that boy runs and jumps is the real limit. There's only Billy Burton, of the Irish-American, that can touch him. You've certainly got the pick of the bunch, Katie.'

He stared at her admiringly, as if for the first time realizing her true worth. For Mr Murdoch was a great patron of sport.

With these facts in her possession Katie had approached the interview with her grandfather with a good deal of confidence.

The old man listened to her recital of Mr Brady's qualities in silence. Then he shook his head.

'It can't be, Katie. I couldn't have it.'

'Grandpapa!'

'You're forgetting, my dear.'

'Forgetting?'

'Who ever heard of such a thing? The grand-daughter of the King of England marrying a commoner! It wouldn't do at all.'

Consternation, surprise, and misery kept Katie dumb. She had learned in a hard school to be prepared for sudden blows from the hand of fate, but this one was so entirely unforeseen that it found her unprepared, and she was crushed by it. She knew her grandfather's obstinacy too well to argue against the decision.

'Oh, no, not at all,' he repeated. 'Oh, no, it wouldn't do.'

Katie said nothing; she was beyond speech. She stood there wide-eyed and silent among the ruins of her little air-castle. The old man patted her hand affectionately. He was pleased at her docility. It was the right attitude, becoming in one of her high rank.

'I am very sorry, my dear, but--oh, no! oh, no! oh, no--' His voice trailed away into an unintelligible mutter. He was a very old man, and he was not always able to concentrate his thoughts on a subject for any length of time.

So little did Ted Brady realize at first the true complexity of the situation that he was inclined, when he heard of the news, to treat the crisis in the jaunty, dashing, love-laughs-at-locksmith fashion so popular with young men of spirit when thwarted in their loves by the interference of parents and guardians.

It took Katie some time to convince him that, just because he had the licence in his pocket, he could not snatch her up on his saddle-bow and carry her off to the nearest clergyman after the manner of young Lochinvar.

In the first flush of his resentment at restraint he saw no reason why he should differentiate between old Mr Bennett and the conventional banns-forbidding father of the novelettes with which he was accustomed to sweeten his hours of idleness. To him, till Katie explained the intricacies of the position, Mr Bennett was simply the proud millionaire who would not hear of his daughter marrying the artist.

'But, Ted, dear, you don't understand,' Katie said. 'We simply couldn't do that. There's no one but me to look after him, poor old man. How could I run away like that and get married? What would become of him?'

'You wouldn't be away long,' urged Mr Brady, a man of many parts, but not a rapid thinker. 'The minister would have us fixed up inside of half an hour. Then we'd look in at Mouquin's for a steak and fried, just to make a sort of wedding breakfast. And then back we'd come, hand-in-hand, and say, "Well, here we are. Now what?"'

'He would never forgive me.'



'That,' said Ted judicially, 'would be up to him.'

'It would kill him. Don't you see, we know that it's all nonsense, this idea of his; but he really thinks he is the king, and he's so old that the shock of my disobeying him would be too much. Honest, Ted, dear, I couldn't.'

Gloom unutterable darkened Ted Brady's always serious countenance. The difficulties of the situation were beginning to come home to him.

'Maybe if I went and saw him--' he suggested at last.

'You \_could\_, ' said Katie doubtfully.

Ted tightened his belt with an air of determination, and bit resolutely on the chewing-gum which was his inseparable companion.

'I will,' he said.

'You'll be nice to him, Ted?'

He nodded. He was the man of action, not words.

It was perhaps ten minutes before he came out of the inner room in which Mr Bennett passed his days. When he did, there was no light of jubilation on his face. His brow was darker than ever.

Katie looked at him anxiously. He returned the look with a sombre shake of the head.

'Nothing doing,' he said shortly. He paused. 'Unless,' he added, 'you count it anything that he's made me an earl.'

In the next two weeks several brains busied themselves with the situation. Genevieve, reconciled to Katie after a decent interval of wounded dignity, said she supposed there was a way out, if one could only think of it, but it certainly got past her. The only approach to a plan of action was suggested by the broken-nosed individual who had been Ted's companion that day at Palisades Park, a gentleman of some eminence in the boxing world, who rejoiced in the name of the Tennessee Bear-Cat.

What they ought to do, in the Bear-Cat's opinion, was to get the old man out into Washington Square one morning. He of Tennessee would then sasshay up in a flip manner and make a break. Ted, waiting close by, would resent his insolence. There would be words, followed by blows.

'See what I mean?' pursued the Bear-Cat. 'There's you and me mixing it. I'll square the cop on the beat to leave us be; he's a friend of mine.'

Pretty soon you land me one on the plexus, and I take th' count. Then there's you hauling me up by th' collar to the old gentleman, and me saying I quits and apologizing. See what I mean?'

The whole, presumably, to conclude with warm expressions of gratitude and esteem from Mr Bennett, and an instant withdrawal of the veto.

Ted himself approved of the scheme. He said it was a cracker-jaw, and he wondered how one so notoriously ivory-skulled as the other could have had such an idea. The Bear-Cat said modestly that he had 'em sometimes. And it is probable that all would have been well, had it not been necessary to tell the plan to Katie, who was horrified at the very idea, spoke warmly of the danger to her grandfather's nervous system, and said she did not think the Bear-Cat could be a nice friend for Ted. And matters relapsed into their old state of hopelessness.

And then, one day, Katie forced herself to tell Ted that she thought it would be better if they did not see each other for a time. She said that these meetings were only a source of pain to both of them. It would really be better if he did not come round for--well, quite some time.

It had not been easy for her to say it. The decision was the outcome of many wakeful nights. She had asked herself the question whether it was fair for her to keep Ted chained to her in this hopeless fashion, when, left to himself and away from her, he might so easily find some other girl to make him happy.

So Ted went, reluctantly, and the little shop on Sixth Avenue knew him no more. And Katie spent her time looking after old Mr Bennett (who had completely forgotten the affair by now, and sometimes wondered why Katie was not so cheerful as she had been), and--for, though unselfish, she was human--hating those unknown girls whom in her mind's eye she could see clustering round Ted, smiling at him, making much of him, and driving the bare recollection of her out of his mind.

The summer passed. July came and went, making New York an oven. August followed, and one wondered why one had complained of July's tepid advances.

It was on the evening of September the eleventh that Katie, having closed the little shop, sat in the dusk on the steps, as many thousands of her fellow-townsmen and townswomen were doing, turning her face to the first breeze which New York had known for two months. The hot spell had broken abruptly that afternoon, and the city was drinking in the coolness as a flower drinks water.

From round the corner, where the yellow cross of the Judson Hotel shone down on Washington Square, came the shouts of children, and the

strains, mellowed by distance, of the indefatigable barrel-organ which had played the same tunes in the same place since the spring.

Katie closed her eyes, and listened. It was very peaceful this evening, so peaceful that for an instant she forgot even to think of Ted. And it was just during this instant that she heard his voice.

'That you, kid?'

He was standing before her, his hands in his pockets, one foot on the pavement, the other in the road; and if he was agitated, his voice did not show it.

'Ted!'

'That's me. Can I see the old man for a minute, Katie?'

This time it did seem to her that she could detect a slight ring of excitement.

'It's no use, Ted. Honest.'

'No harm in going in and passing the time of day, is there? I've got something I want to say to him.'

'What?'

'Tell you later, maybe. Is he in his room?'

He stepped past her, and went in. As he went, he caught her arm and pressed it, but he did not stop. She saw him go into the inner room and heard through the door as he closed it behind him, the murmur of voices. And almost immediately, it seemed to her, her name was called. It was her grandfather's voice which called, high and excited. The door opened, and Ted appeared.

'Come here a minute, Katie, will you?' he said. 'You're wanted.'

The old man was leaning forward in his chair. He was in a state of extraordinary excitement. He quivered and jumped. Ted, standing by the wall, looked as stolid as ever; but his eyes glittered.

'Katie,' cried the old man, 'this is a most remarkable piece of news. This gentleman has just been telling me--extraordinary. He--'

He broke off, and looked at Ted, as he had looked at Katie when he had tried to write the letter to the Parliament of England.

Ted's eye, as it met Katie's, was almost defiant.

'I want to marry you,' he said.

'Yes, yes,' broke in Mr Bennett, impatiently, 'but--'

'And I'm a king.'

'Yes, yes, that's it, that's it, Katie. This gentleman is a king.'

Once more Ted's eye met Katie's, and this time there was an imploring look in it.

'That's right,' he said, slowly. 'I've just been telling your grandfather I'm the King of Coney Island.'

'That's it. Of Coney Island.'

'So there's no objection now to us getting married, kid--Your Royal Highness. It's a royal alliance, see?'

'A royal alliance,' echoed Mr Bennett.

Out in the street, Ted held Katie's hand, and grinned a little sheepishly.

'You're mighty quiet, kid,' he said. 'It looks as if it don't make much of a hit with you, the notion of being married to me.'

'Oh, Ted! But--'

He squeezed her hand.

'I know what you're thinking. I guess it was raw work pulling a tale like that on the old man. I hated to do it, but gee! when a fellow's up against it like I was, he's apt to grab most any chance that comes along. Why, say, kid, it kind of looked to me as if it was sort of \_meant\_. Coming just now, like it did, just when it was wanted, and just when it didn't seem possible it could happen. Why, a week ago I was nigh on two hundred votes behind Billy Burton. The Irish-American put him up, and everybody thought he'd be King at the Mardi Gras. And then suddenly they came pouring in for me, till at the finish I had Billy looking like a regular has-been.

'It's funny the way the voting jumps about every year in this Coney election. It was just Providence, and it didn't seem right to let it go by. So I went in to the old man, and told him. Say, I tell you I was just sweating when I got ready to hand it to him. It was an outside chance he'd remember all about what the Mardi Gras at Coney was, and just what being a king at it amounted to. Then I remembered you telling

me you'd never been to Coney, so I figured your grandfather wouldn't be what you'd call well fixed in his information about it, so I took the chance.

'I tried him out first. I tried him with Brooklyn. Why, say, from the way he took it, he'd either never heard of the place, or else he'd forgotten what it was. I guess he don't remember much, poor old fellow. Then I mentioned Yonkers. He asked me what Yonkers were. Then I reckoned it was safe to bring on Coney, and he fell for it right away. I felt mean, but it had to be done.'

He caught her up, and swung her into the air with a perfectly impassive face. Then, having kissed her, he lowered her gently to the ground again. The action seemed to have relieved his feelings, for when he spoke again it was plain that his conscience no longer troubled him.

'And say,' he said, 'come to think of it, I don't see where there's so much call for me to feel mean. I'm not so far short of being a regular king. Coney's just as big as some of those kingdoms you read about on the other side; and, from what you see in the papers about the goings-on there, it looks to me that, having a whole week on the throne like I'm going to have, amounts to a pretty steady job as kings go.'

## AT GEISENHEIMER'S

As I walked to Geisenheimer's that night I was feeling blue and restless, tired of New York, tired of dancing, tired of everything. Broadway was full of people hurrying to the theatres. Cars rattled by. All the electric lights in the world were blazing down on the Great White Way. And it all seemed stale and dreary to me.

Geisenheimer's was full as usual. All the tables were occupied, and there were several couples already on the dancing-floor in the centre. The band was playing 'Michigan':

\_ I want to go back, I want to go back  
To the place where I was born.  
Far away from harm  
With a milk-pail on my arm.\_

I suppose the fellow who wrote that would have called for the police if anyone had ever really tried to get him on to a farm, but he has certainly put something into the tune which makes you think he meant what he said. It's a homesick tune, that.

I was just looking round for an empty table, when a man jumped up and came towards me, registering joy as if I had been his long-lost sister.

He was from the country. I could see that. It was written all over him, from his face to his shoes.

He came up with his hand out, beaming.

'Why, Miss Roxborough!'

'Why not?' I said.

'Don't you remember me?'

I didn't.

'My name is Ferris.'

'It's a nice name, but it means nothing in my young life.'

'I was introduced to you last time I came here. We danced together.'

This seemed to bear the stamp of truth. If he was introduced to me, he probably danced with me. It's what I'm at Geisenheimer's for.

'When was it?'

'A year ago last April.'

You can't beat these rural charmers. They think New York is folded up and put away in camphor when they leave, and only taken out again when they pay their next visit. The notion that anything could possibly have happened since he was last in our midst to blur the memory of that happy evening had not occurred to Mr Ferris. I suppose he was so accustomed to dating things from 'when I was in New York' that he thought everybody else must do the same.

'Why, sure, I remember you,' I said. 'Algernon Clarence, isn't it?'

'Not Algernon Clarence. My name's Charlie.'

'My mistake. And what's the great scheme, Mr Ferris? Do you want to dance with me again?'

He did. So we started. Mine not to reason why, mine but to do and die, as the poem says. If an elephant had come into Geisenheimer's and asked me to dance I'd have had to do it. And I'm not saying that Mr Ferris wasn't the next thing to it. He was one of those earnest, persevering dancers--the kind that have taken twelve correspondence lessons.

I guess I was about due that night to meet someone from the country. There still come days in the spring when the country seems to get a stranglehold on me and start in pulling. This particular day had been one of them. I got up in the morning and looked out of the window, and the breeze just wrapped me round and began whispering about pigs and chickens. And when I went out on Fifth Avenue there seemed to be flowers everywhere. I headed for the Park, and there was the grass all green, and the trees coming out, and a sort of something in the air--why, say, if there hadn't have been a big policeman keeping an eye on me, I'd have flung myself down and bitten chunks out of the turf.

And as soon as I got to Geisenheimer's they played that 'Michigan' thing.

Why, Charlie from Squeedunk's 'entrance' couldn't have been better worked up if he'd been a star in a Broadway show. The stage was just waiting for him.

But somebody's always taking the joy out of life. I ought to have remembered that the most metropolitan thing in the metropolis is a rustic who's putting in a week there. We weren't thinking on the same plane, Charlie and me. The way I had been feeling all day, what I wanted to talk about was last season's crops. The subject he fancied was this season's chorus-girls. Our souls didn't touch by a mile and a half.

'This is the life!' he said.

There's always a point when that sort of man says that.

'I suppose you come here quite a lot?' he said.

'Pretty often.'

I didn't tell him that I came there every night, and that I came because I was paid for it. If you're a professional dancer at Geisenheimer's, you aren't supposed to advertise the fact. The management thinks that if you did it might send the public away thinking too hard when they saw you win the Great Contest for the Love-r-ly Silver Cup which they offer later in the evening. Say, that Love-r-ly Cup's a joke. I win it on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and Mabel Francis wins it on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It's all perfectly fair and square, of course. It's purely a matter of merit who wins the Love-r-ly Cup. Anybody could win it. Only somehow they don't. And the coincidence of the fact that Mabel and I always do has kind of got on the management's nerves, and they don't like us to tell people we're employed there. They prefer us to blush unseen.

'It's a great place,' said Mr Ferris, 'and New York's a great place.  
I'd like to live in New York.'

'The loss is ours. Why don't you?'

'Some city! But dad's dead now, and I've got the drugstore, you know.'

He spoke as if I ought to remember reading about it in the papers.

'And I'm making good with it, what's more. I've got push and ideas.  
Say, I got married since I saw you last.'

'You did, did you?' I said. 'Then what are you doing, may I ask,  
dancing on Broadway like a gay bachelor? I suppose you have left your  
wife at Hicks' Corners, singing "Where is my wandering boy tonight"?''

'Not Hicks' Corners. Ashley, Maine. That's where I live. My wife comes  
from Rodney.... Pardon me, I'm afraid I stepped on your foot.'

'My fault,' I said; 'I lost step. Well, I wonder you aren't ashamed  
even to think of your wife, when you've left her all alone out there  
while you come whooping it up in New York. Haven't you got any  
conscience?'

'But I haven't left her. She's here.'

'In New York?'

'In this restaurant. That's her up there.'

I looked up at the balcony. There was a face hanging over the red plush  
rail. It looked to me as if it had some hidden sorrow. I'd noticed it  
before, when we were dancing around, and I had wondered what the  
trouble was. Now I began to see.

'Why aren't you dancing with her and giving her a good time, then?' I  
said.

'Oh, she's having a good time.'

'She doesn't look it. She looks as if she would like to be down here,  
treading the measure.'

'She doesn't dance much.'

'Don't you have dances at Ashley?'

'It's different at home. She dances well enough for Ashley, but--well,  
this isn't Ashley.'



'I see. But you're not like that?'

He gave a kind of smirk.

'Oh, I've been in New York before.'

I could have bitten him, the sawn-off little rube! It made me mad. He was ashamed to dance in public with his wife--didn't think her good enough for him. So he had dumped her in a chair, given her a lemonade, and told her to be good, and then gone off to have a good time. They could have had me arrested for what I was thinking just then.

The band began to play something else.

'This is the life!' said Mr Ferris. 'Let's do it again.'

'Let somebody else do it,' I said. 'I'm tired. I'll introduce you to some friends of mine.'

So I took him off, and whisked him on to some girls I knew at one of the tables.

'Shake hands with my friend Mr Ferris,' I said. 'He wants to show you the latest steps. He does most of them on your feet.'

I could have betted on Charlie, the Debonair Pride of Ashley. Guess what he said? He said, 'This is the life!'

And I left him, and went up to the balcony.

She was leaning with her elbows on the red plush, looking down on the dancing-floor. They had just started another tune, and hubby was moving around with one of the girls I'd introduced him to. She didn't have to prove to me that she came from the country. I knew it. She was a little bit of a thing, old-fashioned looking. She was dressed in grey, with white muslin collar and cuffs, and her hair done simple. She had a black hat.

I kind of hovered for awhile. It isn't the best thing I do, being shy; as a general thing I'm more or less there with the nerve; but somehow I sort of hesitated to charge in.

Then I braced up, and made for the vacant chair.

'I'll sit here, if you don't mind,' I said.

She turned in a startled way. I could see she was wondering who I was, and what right I had there, but wasn't certain whether it might not be

city etiquette for strangers to come and dump themselves down and start chatting. 'I've just been dancing with your husband,' I said, to ease things along.

'I saw you.'

She fixed me with a pair of big brown eyes. I took one look at them, and then I had to tell myself that it might be pleasant, and a relief to my feelings, to take something solid and heavy and drop it over the rail on to hubby, but the management wouldn't like it. That was how I felt about him just then. The poor kid was doing everything with those eyes except crying. She looked like a dog that's been kicked.

She looked away, and fiddled with the string of the electric light. There was a hatpin lying on the table. She picked it up, and began to dig at the red plush.

'Ah, come on sis,' I said; 'tell me all about it.'

'I don't know what you mean.'

'You can't fool me. Tell me your troubles.'

'I don't know you.'

'You don't have to know a person to tell her your troubles. I sometimes tell mine to the cat that camps out on the wall opposite my room. What did you want to leave the country for, with summer coming on?'

She didn't answer, but I could see it coming, so I sat still and waited. And presently she seemed to make up her mind that, even if it was no business of mine, it would be a relief to talk about it.

'We're on our honeymoon. Charlie wanted to come to New York. I didn't want to, but he was set on it. He's been here before.'

'So he told me.'

'He's wild about New York.'

'But you're not.'

'I hate it.'

'Why?'

She dug away at the red plush with the hatpin, picking out little bits and dropping them over the edge. I could see she was bracing herself to put me wise to the whole trouble. There's a time comes when things

aren't going right, and you've had all you can stand, when you have got to tell somebody about it, no matter who it is.

'I hate New York,' she said getting it out at last with a rush. 'I'm scared of it. It--it isn't fair Charlie bringing me here. I didn't want to come. I knew what would happen. I felt it all along.'

'What do you think will happen, then?'

She must have picked away at least an inch of the red plush before she answered. It's lucky Jimmy, the balcony waiter, didn't see her; it would have broken his heart; he's as proud of that red plush as if he had paid for it himself.

'When I first went to live at Rodney,' she said, 'two years ago--we moved there from Illinois--there was a man there named Tyson--Jack Tyson. He lived all alone and didn't seem to want to know anyone. I couldn't understand it till somebody told me all about him. I can understand it now. Jack Tyson married a Rodney girl, and they came to New York for their honeymoon, just like us. And when they got there I guess she got to comparing him with the fellows she saw, and comparing the city with Rodney, and when she got home she just couldn't settle down.'

'Well?'

'After they had been back in Rodney for a little while she ran away. Back to the city, I guess.'

'I suppose he got a divorce?'

'No, he didn't. He still thinks she may come back to him.'

'He still thinks she will come back?' I said. 'After she has been away three years!'

'Yes. He keeps her things just the same as she left them when she went away, everything just the same.'

'But isn't he angry with her for what she did? If I was a man and a girl treated me that way, I'd be apt to murder her if she tried to show up again.'

'He wouldn't. Nor would I, if--if anything like that happened to me; I'd wait and wait, and go on hoping all the time. And I'd go down to the station to meet the train every afternoon, just like Jack Tyson.'

Something splashed on the tablecloth. It made me jump.

'For goodness' sake,' I said, 'what's your trouble? Brace up. I know it's a sad story, but it's not your funeral.'

'It is. It is. The same thing's going to happen to me.'

'Take a hold on yourself. Don't cry like that.'

'I can't help it. Oh! I knew it would happen. It's happening right now. Look--look at him.'

I glanced over the rail, and I saw what she meant. There was her Charlie, dancing about all over the floor as if he had just discovered that he hadn't lived till then. I saw him say something to the girl he was dancing with. I wasn't near enough to hear it, but I bet it was 'This is the life!' If I had been his wife, in the same position as this kid, I guess I'd have felt as bad as she did, for if ever a man exhibited all the symptoms of incurable Newyorkitis, it was this Charlie Ferris.

'I'm not like these New York girls,' she choked. 'I can't be smart. I don't want to be. I just want to live at home and be happy. I knew it would happen if we came to the city. He doesn't think me good enough for him. He looks down on me.'

'Pull yourself together.'

'And I do love him so!'

Goodness knows what I should have said if I could have thought of anything to say. But just then the music stopped, and somebody on the floor below began to speak.

'Ladeez 'n' gemmen,' he said, 'there will now take place our great Numbah Contest. This gen-u-ine sporting contest--'

It was Izzy Baermann making his nightly speech, introducing the Love-r-ly Cup; and it meant that, for me, duty called. From where I sat I could see Izzy looking about the room, and I knew he was looking for me. It's the management's nightmare that one of these evenings Mabel or I won't show up, and somebody else will get away with the Love-r-ly Cup.

'Sorry I've got to go,' I said. 'I have to be in this.'

And then suddenly I had the great idea. It came to me like a flash, I looked at her, crying there, and I looked over the rail at Charlie the Boy Wonder, and I knew that this was where I got a stranglehold on my place in the Hall of Fame, along with the great thinkers of the age.

'Come on,' I said. 'Come along. Stop crying and powder your nose and get a move on. You're going to dance this.'

'But Charlie doesn't want to dance with me.'

'It may have escaped your notice,' I said, 'but your Charlie is not the only man in New York, or even in this restaurant. I'm going to dance with Charlie myself, and I'll introduce you to someone who can go through the movements. Listen!'

'The lady of each couple'--this was Izzy, getting it off his diaphragm--'will receive a ticket containing a num-bah. The dance will then proceed, and the num-bahs will be eliminated one by one, those called out by the judge kindly returning to their seats as their num-bah is called. The num-bah finally remaining is the winning num-bah. The contest is a genuine sporting contest, decided purely by the skill of the holders of the various num-bahs.' (Izzy stopped blushing at the age of six.) 'Will ladies now kindly step forward and receive their num-bahs. The winner, the holder of the num-bah left on the floor when the other num-bahs have been eliminated' (I could see Izzy getting more and more uneasy, wondering where on earth I'd got to), 'will receive this Love-r-ly Silver Cup, presented by the management. Ladies will now kindly step forward and receive their num-bahs.'

I turned to Mrs Charlie. 'There,' I said, 'don't you want to win a Love-r-ly Silver Cup?'

'But I couldn't.'

'You never know your luck.'

'But it isn't luck. Didn't you hear him say it's a contest decided purely by skill?'

'Well, try your skill, then.' I felt as if I could have shaken her. 'For goodness' sake,' I said, 'show a little grit. Aren't you going to stir a finger to keep your Charlie? Suppose you win, think what it will mean. He will look up to you for the rest of your life. When he starts talking about New York, all you will have to say is, "New York? Ah, yes, that was the town I won that Love-r-ly Silver Cup in, was it not?" and he'll drop as if you had hit him behind the ear with a sandbag. Pull yourself together and try.'

I saw those brown eyes of hers flash, and she said, 'I'll try.'

'Good for you,' I said. 'Now you get those tears dried, and fix yourself up, and I'll go down and get the tickets.'

Izzy was mighty relieved when I bore down on him.

'Gee!' he said, 'I thought you had run away, or was sick or something. Here's your ticket.'

'I want two, Izzy. One's for a friend of mine. And I say, Izzy, I'd take it as a personal favour if you would let her stop on the floor as one of the last two couples. There's a reason. She's a kid from the country, and she wants to make a hit.'

'Sure, that'll be all right. Here are the tickets. Yours is thirty-six, hers is ten.' He lowered his voice. 'Don't go mixing them.'

I went back to the balcony. On the way I got hold of Charlie.

'We're dancing this together,' I said.

He grinned all across his face.

I found Mrs Charlie looking as if she had never shed a tear in her life. She certainly had pluck, that kid.

'Come on,' I said. 'Stick to your ticket like wax and watch your step.'

I guess you've seen these sporting contests at Geisenheimer's. Or, if you haven't seen them at Geisenheimer's, you've seen them somewhere else. They're all the same.

When we began, the floor was so crowded that there was hardly elbow-room. Don't tell me there aren't any optimists nowadays. Everyone was looking as if they were wondering whether to have the Love-r-ly Cup in the sitting-room or the bedroom. You never saw such a hopeful gang in your life.

Presently Izzy gave tongue. The management expects him to be humorous on these occasions, so he did his best.

'Num-bahs, seven, eleven, and twenty-one will kindly rejoin their sorrowing friends.'

This gave us a little more elbow-room, and the band started again.

A few minutes later, Izzy once more: 'Num-bahs thirteen, sixteen, and seventeen--good-bye.'

Off we went again.

'Num-bah twelve, we hate to part with you, but--back to your table!'

A plump girl in a red hat, who had been dancing with a kind smile, as if she were doing it to amuse the children, left the floor.

'Num-bahs six, fifteen, and twenty, thumbs down!'

And pretty soon the only couples left were Charlie and me, Mrs Charlie and the fellow I'd introduced her to, and a bald-headed man and a girl in a white hat. He was one of your stick-at-it performers. He had been dancing all the evening. I had noticed him from the balcony. He looked like a hard-boiled egg from up there.

He was a trier all right, that fellow, and had things been otherwise, so to speak, I'd have been glad to see him win. But it was not to be. Ah, no!

'Num-bah nineteen, you're getting all flushed. Take a rest.'

So there it was, a straight contest between me and Charlie and Mrs Charlie and her man. Every nerve in my system was tingling with suspense and excitement, was it not? It was not.

Charlie, as I've already hinted, was not a dancer who took much of his attention off his feet while in action. He was there to do his durnedest, not to inspect objects of interest by the wayside. The correspondence college he'd attended doesn't guarantee to teach you to do two things at once. It won't bind itself to teach you to look round the room while you're dancing. So Charlie hadn't the least suspicion of the state of the drama. He was breathing heavily down my neck in a determined sort of way, with his eyes glued to the floor. All he knew was that the competition had thinned out a bit, and the honour of Ashley, Maine, was in his hands.

You know how the public begins to sit up and take notice when these dance-contests have been narrowed down to two couples. There are evenings when I quite forget myself, when I'm one of the last two left in, and get all excited. There's a sort of hum in the air, and, as you go round the room, people at the tables start applauding. Why, if you didn't know about the inner workings of the thing, you'd be all of a twitter.

It didn't take my practised ear long to discover that it wasn't me and Charlie that the great public was cheering for. We would go round the floor without getting a hand, and every time Mrs Charlie and her guy got to a corner there was a noise like election night. She sure had made a hit.

I took a look at her across the floor, and I didn't wonder. She was a different kid from what she'd been upstairs. I never saw anybody look so happy and pleased with herself. Her eyes were like lamps, and her

cheeks all pink, and she was going at it like a champion. I knew what had made a hit with the people. It was the look of her. She made you think of fresh milk and new-laid eggs and birds singing. To see her was like getting away to the country in August. It's funny about people who live in the city. They chuck out their chests, and talk about little old New York being good enough for them, and there's a street in heaven they call Broadway, and all the rest of it; but it seems to me that what they really live for is that three weeks in the summer when they get away into the country. I knew exactly why they were cheering so hard for Mrs Charlie. She made them think of their holidays which were coming along, when they would go and board at the farm and drink out of the old oaken bucket, and call the cows by their first names.

Gee! I felt just like that myself. All day the country had been tugging at me, and now it tugged worse than ever.

I could have smelled the new-mown hay if it wasn't that when you're in Geisenheimer's you have to smell Geisenheimer's, because it leaves no chance for competition.

'Keep working,' I said to Charlie. 'It looks to me as if we are going back in the betting.'

'Uh, huh!' he says, too busy to blink.

'Do some of those fancy steps of yours. We need them in our business.'

And the way that boy worked--it was astonishing!

Out of the corner of my eye I could see Izzy Baermann, and he wasn't looking happy. He was nerving himself for one of those quick referee's decisions--the sort you make and then duck under the ropes, and run five miles, to avoid the incensed populace. It was this kind of thing happening every now and then that prevented his job being perfect. Mabel Francis told me that one night when Izzy declared her the winner of the great sporting contest, it was such raw work that she thought there'd have been a riot. It looked pretty much as if he was afraid the same thing was going to happen now. There wasn't a doubt which of us two couples was the one that the customers wanted to see win that Love-r-ly Silver Cup. It was a walk-over for Mrs Charlie, and Charlie and I were simply among those present.

But Izzy had his duty to do, and drew a salary for doing it, so he moistened his lips, looked round to see that his strategic railways weren't blocked, swallowed twice, and said in a husky voice:

'Num-bah ten, please re-tiah!'

I stopped at once.



'Come along,' said I to Charlie. 'That's our exit cue.'

And we walked off the floor amidst applause.

'Well,' says Charlie, taking out his handkerchief and attending to his brow, which was like the village blacksmith's, 'we didn't do so bad, did we? We didn't do so bad, I guess! We--'

And he looked up at the balcony, expecting to see the dear little wife, draped over the rail, worshipping him; when, just as his eye is moving up, it gets caught by the sight of her a whole heap lower down than he had expected--on the floor, in fact.

She wasn't doing much in the worshipping line just at that moment. She was too busy.

It was a regular triumphal progress for the kid. She and her partner were doing one or two rounds now for exhibition purposes, like the winning couple always do at Geisenheimer's, and the room was fairly rising at them. You'd have thought from the way they were clapping that they had been betting all their spare cash on her.

Charlie gets her well focused, then he lets his jaw drop, till he pretty near bumped it against the floor.

'But--but--but--' he begins.

'I know,' I said. 'It begins to look as if she could dance well enough for the city after all. It begins to look as if she had sort of put one over on somebody, don't it? It begins to look as if it were a pity you didn't think of dancing with her yourself.'

'I--I--I--'

'You come along and have a nice cold drink,' I said, 'and you'll soon pick up.'

He tottered after me to a table, looking as if he had been hit by a street-car. He had got his.

I was so busy looking after Charlie, flapping the towel and working on him with the oxygen, that, if you'll believe me, it wasn't for quite a time that I thought of glancing around to see how the thing had struck Izzy Baermann.

If you can imagine a fond father whose only son has hit him with a brick, jumped on his stomach, and then gone off with all his money, you have a pretty good notion of how poor old Izzy looked. He was staring

at me across the room, and talking to himself and jerking his hands about. Whether he thought he was talking to me, or whether he was rehearsing the scene where he broke it to the boss that a mere stranger had got away with his Love-r-ly Silver Cup, I don't know. Whichever it was, he was being mighty eloquent.

I gave him a nod, as much as to say that it would all come right in the future, and then I turned to Charlie again. He was beginning to pick up.

'She won the cup!' he said in a dazed voice, looking at me as if I could do something about it.

'You bet she did!'

'But--well, what do you know about that?'

I saw that the moment had come to put it straight to him. 'I'll tell you what I know about it,' I said. 'If you take my advice, you'll hustle that kid straight back to Ashley--or wherever it is that you said you poison the natives by making up the wrong prescriptions--before she gets New York into her system. When I was talking to her upstairs, she was telling me about a fellow in her village who got it in the neck just the same as you're apt to do.'

He started. 'She was telling you about Jack Tyson?'

'That was his name--Jack Tyson. He lost his wife through letting her have too much New York. Don't you think it's funny she should have mentioned him if she hadn't had some idea that she might act just the same as his wife did?'

He turned quite green.

'You don't think she would do that?'

'Well, if you'd heard her--She couldn't talk of anything except this Tyson, and what his wife did to him. She talked of it sort of sad, kind of regretful, as if she was sorry, but felt that it had to be. I could see she had been thinking about it a whole lot.'

Charlie stiffened in his seat, and then began to melt with pure fright. He took up his empty glass with a shaking hand and drank a long drink out of it. It didn't take much observation to see that he had had the jolt he wanted, and was going to be a whole heap less jaunty and metropolitan from now on. In fact, the way he looked, I should say he had finished with metropolitan jauntiness for the rest of his life.

'I'll take her home tomorrow,' he said. 'But--will she come?'

'That's up to you. If you can persuade her--Here she is now. I should start at once.'

Mrs Charlie, carrying the cup, came to the table. I was wondering what would be the first thing she would say. If it had been Charlie, of course he'd have said, 'This is the life!' but I looked for something snappier from her. If I had been in her place there were at least ten things I could have thought of to say, each nastier than the other.

She sat down and put the cup on the table. Then she gave the cup a long look. Then she drew a deep breath. Then she looked at Charlie.

'Oh, Charlie, dear,' she said, 'I do wish I'd been dancing with you!'

Well, I'm not sure that that wasn't just as good as anything I would have said. Charlie got right off the mark. After what I had told him, he wasn't wasting any time.

'Darling,' he said, humbly, 'you're a wonder! What will they say about this at home?' He did pause here for a moment, for it took nerve to say it; but then he went right on. 'Mary, how would it be if we went home right away--first train tomorrow, and showed it to them?'

'Oh, Charlie!' she said.

His face lit up as if somebody had pulled a switch.

'You will? You don't want to stop on? You aren't wild about New York?'

'If there was a train,' she said, 'I'd start tonight. But I thought you loved the city so, Charlie?'

He gave a kind of shiver. 'I never want to see it again in my life!' he said.

'You'll excuse me,' I said, getting up, 'I think there's a friend of mine wants to speak to me.'

And I crossed over to where Izzy had been standing for the last five minutes, making signals to me with his eyebrows.

You couldn't have called Izzy coherent at first. He certainly had trouble with his vocal chords, poor fellow. There was one of those African explorer men used to come to Geisenheimer's a lot when he was home from roaming the trackless desert, and he used to tell me about tribes he had met who didn't use real words at all, but talked to one another in clicks and gurgles. He imitated some of their chatter one night to amuse me, and, believe me, Izzy Baermann started talking the

same language now. Only he didn't do it to amuse me.

He was like one of those gramophone records when it's getting into its stride.

'Be calm, Isadore,' I said. 'Something is troubling you. Tell me all about it.'

He clicked some more, and then he got it out.

'Say, are you crazy? What did you do it for? Didn't I tell you as plain as I could; didn't I say it twenty times, when you came for the tickets, that yours was thirty-six?'

'Didn't you say my friend's was thirty-six?'

'Are you deaf? I said hers was ten.'

'Then,' I said handsomely, 'say no more. The mistake was mine. It begins to look as if I must have got them mixed.'

He did a few Swedish exercises.

'Say no more? That's good! That's great! You've got nerve. I'll say that.'

'It was a lucky mistake, Izzy. It saved your life. The people would have lynched you if you had given me the cup. They were solid for her.'

'What's the boss going to say when I tell him?'

'Never mind what the boss will say. Haven't you any romance in your system, Izzy? Look at those two sitting there with their heads together. Isn't it worth a silver cup to have made them happy for life? They are on their honeymoon, Isadore. Tell the boss exactly how it happened, and say that I thought it was up to Geisenheimer's to give them a wedding-present.'

He clicked for a spell.

'Ah!' he said. 'Ah! now you've done it! Now you've given yourself away! You did it on purpose. You mixed those tickets on purpose. I thought as much. Say, who do you think you are, doing this sort of thing? Don't you know that professional dancers are three for ten cents? I could go out right now and whistle, and get a dozen girls for your job. The boss'll sack you just one minute after I tell him.'

'No, he won't, Izzy, because I'm going to resign.'

'You'd better!'

'That's what I think. I'm sick of this place, Izzy. I'm sick of dancing. I'm sick of New York. I'm sick of everything. I'm going back to the country. I thought I had got the pigs and chickens clear out of my system, but I hadn't. I've suspected it for a long, long time, and tonight I know it. Tell the boss, with my love, that I'm sorry, but it had to be done. And if he wants to talk back, he must do it by letter: Mrs John Tyson, Rodney, Maine, is the address.'

## THE MAKING OF MAC'S

Mac's Restaurant--nobody calls it MacFarland's--is a mystery. It is off the beaten track. It is not smart. It does not advertise. It provides nothing nearer to an orchestra than a solitary piano, yet, with all these things against it, it is a success. In theatrical circles especially it holds a position which might turn the white lights of many a supper-palace green with envy.

This is mysterious. You do not expect Soho to compete with and even eclipse Piccadilly in this way. And when Soho does so compete, there is generally romance of some kind somewhere in the background.

Somebody happened to mention to me casually that Henry, the old waiter, had been at Mac's since its foundation.

'Me?' said Henry, questioned during a slack spell in the afternoon.  
'Rather!'

'Then can you tell me what it was that first gave the place the impetus which started it on its upward course? What causes should you say were responsible for its phenomenal prosperity? What--'

'What gave it a leg-up? Is that what you're trying to get at?'

'Exactly. What gave it a leg-up? Can you tell me?'

'Me?' said Henry. 'Rather!'

And he told me this chapter from the unwritten history of the London whose day begins when Nature's finishes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Old Mr MacFarland ( \_ said Henry \_ ) started the place fifteen years

ago. He was a widower with one son and what you might call half a daughter. That's to say, he had adopted her. Katie was her name, and she was the child of a dead friend of his. The son's name was Andy. A little freckled nipper he was when I first knew him--one of those silent kids that don't say much and have as much obstinacy in them as if they were mules. Many's the time, in them days, I've clumped him on the head and told him to do something; and he didn't run yelling to his pa, same as most kids would have done, but just said nothing and went on not doing whatever it was I had told him to do. That was the sort of disposition Andy had, and it grew on him. Why, when he came back from Oxford College the time the old man sent for him--what I'm going to tell you about soon--he had a jaw on him like the ram of a battleship. Katie was the kid for my money. I liked Katie. We all liked Katie.

Old MacFarland started out with two big advantages. One was Jules, and the other was me. Jules came from Paris, and he was the greatest cook you ever seen. And me--well, I was just come from ten years as waiter at the Guelph, and I won't conceal it from you that I gave the place a tone. I gave Soho something to think about over its chop, believe me. It was a come-down in the world for me, maybe, after the Guelph, but what I said to myself was that, when you get a tip in Soho, it may be only tuppence, but you keep it; whereas at the Guelph about ninety-nine hundredths of it goes to helping to maintain some blooming head waiter in the style to which he has been accustomed. It was through my kind of harping on that fact that me and the Guelph parted company. The head waiter complained to the management the day I called him a fat-headed vampire.

Well, what with me and what with Jules, MacFarland's--it wasn't Mac's in them days--began to get a move on. Old MacFarland, who knew a good man when he saw one and always treated me more like a brother than anything else, used to say to me, 'Henry, if this keeps up, I'll be able to send the boy to Oxford College'; until one day he changed it to, 'Henry, I'm going to send the boy to Oxford College'; and next year, sure enough, off he went.

Katie was sixteen then, and she had just been given the cashier job, as a treat. She wanted to do something to help the old man, so he put her on a high chair behind a wire cage with a hole in it, and she gave the customers their change. And let me tell you, mister, that a man that wasn't satisfied after he'd had me serve him a dinner cooked by Jules and then had a chat with Katie through the wire cage would have groused at Paradise. For she was pretty, was Katie, and getting prettier every day. I spoke to the boss about it. I said it was putting temptation in the girl's way to set her up there right in the public eye, as it were. And he told me to hop it. So I hopped it.

Katie was wild about dancing. Nobody knew it till later, but all this while, it turned out, she was attending regular one of them schools.

That was where she went to in the afternoons, when we all thought she was visiting girl friends. It all come out after, but she fooled us then. Girls are like monkeys when it comes to artfulness. She called me Uncle Bill, because she said the name Henry always reminded her of cold mutton. If it had been young Andy that had said it I'd have clumped him one; but he never said anything like that. Come to think of it, he never said anything much at all. He just thought a heap without opening his face.

So young Andy went off to college, and I said to him, 'Now then, you young devil, you be a credit to us, or I'll fetch you a clip when you come home.' And Katie said, 'Oh, Andy, I \_shall\_ miss you.' And Andy didn't say nothing to me, and he didn't say nothing to Katie, but he gave her a look, and later in the day I found her crying, and she said she'd got toothache, and I went round the corner to the chemist's and brought her something for it.

It was in the middle of Andy's second year at college that the old man had the stroke which put him out of business. He went down under it as if he'd been hit with an axe, and the doctor tells him he'll never be able to leave his bed again.

So they sent for Andy, and he quit his college, and come back to London to look after the restaurant.

I was sorry for the kid. I told him so in a fatherly kind of way. And he just looked at me and says, 'Thanks very much, Henry.'

'What must be must be,' I says. 'Maybe, it's all for the best. Maybe it's better you're here than in among all those young devils in your Oxford school what might be leading you astray.'

'If you would think less of me and more of your work, Henry,' he says, 'perhaps that gentleman over there wouldn't have to shout sixteen times for the waiter.'

Which, on looking into it, I found to be the case, and he went away without giving me no tip, which shows what you lose in a hard world by being sympathetic.

I'm bound to say that young Andy showed us all jolly quick that he hadn't come home just to be an ornament about the place. There was exactly one boss in the restaurant, and it was him. It come a little hard at first to have to be respectful to a kid whose head you had spent many a happy hour clumping for his own good in the past; but he pretty soon showed me I could do it if I tried, and I done it. As for Jules and the two young fellers that had been taken on to help me owing to increase of business, they would jump through hoops and roll over if he just looked at them. He was a boy who liked his own way, was Andy,

and, believe me, at MacFarland's Restaurant he got it.

And then, when things had settled down into a steady jog, Katie took the bit in her teeth.

She done it quite quiet and unexpected one afternoon when there was only me and her and Andy in the place. And I don't think either of them knew I was there, for I was taking an easy on a chair at the back, reading an evening paper.

She said, kind of quiet, 'Oh, Andy.'

'Yes, darling,' he said.

And that was the first I knew that there was anything between them.

'Andy, I've something to tell you.'

'What is it?'

She kind of hesitated.

'Andy, dear, I shan't be able to help any more in the restaurant.'

He looked at her, sort of surprised.

'What do you mean?'

'I'm--I'm going on the stage.'

I put down my paper. What do you mean? Did I listen? Of course I listened. What do you take me for?

From where I sat I could see young Andy's face, and I didn't need any more to tell me there was going to be trouble. That jaw of his was right out. I forgot to tell you that the old man had died, poor old feller, maybe six months before, so that now Andy was the real boss instead of just acting boss; and what's more, in the nature of things, he was, in a manner of speaking, Katie's guardian, with power to tell her what she could do and what she couldn't. And I felt that Katie wasn't going to have any smooth passage with this stage business which she was giving him. Andy didn't hold with the stage--not with any girl he was fond of being on it anyway. And when Andy didn't like a thing he said so.

He said so now.

'You aren't going to do anything of the sort.'



'Don't be horrid about it, Andy dear. I've got a big chance. Why should you be horrid about it?'

'I'm not going to argue about it. You don't go.'

'But it's such a big chance. And I've been working for it for years.'

'How do you mean working for it?'

And then it came out about this dancing-school she'd been attending regular.

When she'd finished telling him about it, he just shoved out his jaw another inch.

'You aren't going on the stage.'

'But it's such a chance. I saw Mr Mandelbaum yesterday, and he saw me dance, and he was very pleased, and said he would give me a solo dance to do in this new piece he's putting on.'

'You aren't going on the stage.'

What I always say is, you can't beat tact. If you're smooth and tactful you can get folks to do anything you want; but if you just shove your jaw out at them, and order them about, why, then they get their backs up and sauce you. I knew Katie well enough to know that she would do anything for Andy, if he asked her properly; but she wasn't going to stand this sort of thing. But you couldn't drive that into the head of a feller like young Andy with a steam-hammer.

She flared up, quick, as if she couldn't hold herself in no longer.

'I certainly am,' she said.

'You know what it means?'

'What does it mean?'

'The end of--everything.'

She kind of blinked as if he'd hit her, then she chucks her chin up.

'Very well,' she says. 'Good-bye.'

'Good-bye,' says Andy, the pig-headed young mule; and she walks out one way and he walks out another.

\* \* \* \* \*

I don't follow the drama much as a general rule, but seeing that it was now, so to speak, in the family, I did keep an eye open for the newspaper notices of 'The Rose Girl', which was the name of the piece which Mr Mandelbaum was letting Katie do a solo dance in; and while some of them cussed the play considerable, they all gave Katie a nice word. One feller said that she was like cold water on the morning after, which is high praise coming from a newspaper man.

There wasn't a doubt about it. She was a success. You see, she was something new, and London always sits up and takes notice when you give it that.

There were pictures of her in the papers, and one evening paper had a piece about 'How I Preserve My Youth' signed by her. I cut it out and showed it to Andy.

He gave it a look. Then he gave me a look, and I didn't like his eye.

'Well?' he says.

'Pardon,' I says.

'What about it?' he says.

'I don't know,' I says.

'Get back to your work,' he says.

So I got back.

It was that same night that the queer thing happened.

We didn't do much in the supper line at MacFarland's as a rule in them days, but we kept open, of course, in case Soho should take it into its head to treat itself to a welsh rabbit before going to bed; so all hands was on deck, ready for the call if it should come, at half past eleven that night; but we weren't what you might term sanguine.

Well, just on the half-hour, up drives a taxicab, and in comes a party of four. There was a nut, another nut, a girl, and another girl. And the second girl was Katie.

'Hallo, Uncle Bill!' she says.

'Good evening, madam,' I says dignified, being on duty.

'Oh, stop it, Uncle Bill,' she says. 'Say "Hallo!" to a pal, and smile prettily, or I'll tell them about the time you went to the White City.'

Well, there's some by-gones that are best left by-gones, and the night at the White City what she was alluding to was one of them. I still maintain, as I always shall maintain, that the constable had no right to--but, there, it's a story that wouldn't interest you. And, anyway, I was glad to see Katie again, so I give her a smile.

'Not so much of it,' I says. 'Not so much of it. I'm glad to see you, Katie.'

'Three cheers! Jimmy, I want to introduce you to my friend, Uncle Bill. Ted, this is Uncle Bill. Violet, this is Uncle Bill.'

It wasn't my place to fetch her one on the side of the head, but I'd of liked to have; for she was acting like she'd never used to act when I knew her--all tough and bold. Then it come to me that she was nervous. And natural, too, seeing young Andy might pop out any moment.

And sure enough out he popped from the back room at that very instant. Katie looked at him, and he looked at Katie, and I seen his face get kind of hard; but he didn't say a word. And presently he went out again.

I heard Katie breathe sort of deep.

'He's looking well, Uncle Bill, ain't he?' she says to me, very soft.

'Pretty fair,' I says. 'Well, kid, I been reading the pieces in the papers. You've knocked 'em.'

'Ah, don't Bill,' she says, as if I'd hurt her. And me meaning only to say the civil thing. Girls are rum.

When the party had paid their bill and give me a tip which made me think I was back at the Guelph again--only there weren't any Dick Turpin of a head waiter standing by for his share--they hopped it. But Katie hung back and had a word with me.

'He \_was\_ looking well, wasn't he, Uncle Bill?'

'Rather!'

'Does--does he ever speak of me?'

'I ain't heard him.'

'I suppose he's still pretty angry with me, isn't he, Uncle Bill? You're sure you've never heard him speak of me?'

So, to cheer her up, I tells her about the piece in the paper I showed him; but it didn't seem to cheer her up any. And she goes out.

The very next night in she come again for supper, but with different nuts and different girls. There was six of them this time, counting her. And they'd hardly sat down at their table, when in come the fellers she had called Jimmy and Ted with two girls. And they sat eating of their suppers and chaffing one another across the floor, all as pleasant and sociable as you please.

'I say, Katie,' I heard one of the nuts say, 'you were right. He's worth the price of admission.'

I don't know who they meant, but they all laughed. And every now and again I'd hear them praising the food, which I don't wonder at, for Jules had certainly done himself proud. All artistic temperament, these Frenchmen are. The moment I told him we had company, so to speak, he blossomed like a flower does when you put it in water.

'Ah, see, at last!' he says, trying to grab me and kiss me. 'Our fame has gone abroad in the world which amuses himself, ain't it? For a good supper connexion I have always prayed, and he has arrived.'

Well, it did begin to look as if he was right. Ten high-class supper-folk in an evening was pretty hot stuff for MacFarland's. I'm bound to say I got excited myself. I can't deny that I missed the Guelph at times.

On the fifth night, when the place was fairly packed and looked for all the world like Oddy's or Romano's, and me and the two young fellers helping me was working double tides, I suddenly understood, and I went up to Katie and, bending over her very respectful with a bottle, I whispers, 'Hot stuff, kid. This is a jolly fine boom you're working for the old place.' And by the way she smiled back at me, I seen I had guessed right.

Andy was hanging round, keeping an eye on things, as he always done, and I says to him, when I was passing, 'She's doing us proud, bucking up the old place, ain't she?' And he says, 'Get on with your work.' And I got on.

Katie hung back at the door, when she was on her way out, and had a word with me.

'Has he said anything about me, Uncle Bill?'

'Not a word,' I says.

And she goes out.

You've probably noticed about London, mister, that a flock of sheep isn't in it with the nuts, the way they all troop on each other's heels to supper-places. One month they're all going to one place, next month to another. Someone in the push starts the cry that he's found a new place, and off they all go to try it. The trouble with most of the places is that once they've got the custom they think it's going to keep on coming and all they've got to do is to lean back and watch it come. Popularity comes in at the door, and good food and good service flies out at the window. We wasn't going to have any of that at MacFarland's. Even if it hadn't been that Andy would have come down like half a ton of bricks on the first sign of slackness, Jules and me both of us had our professional reputations to keep up. I didn't give myself no airs when I seen things coming our way. I worked all the harder, and I seen to it that the four young fellers under me--there was four now--didn't lose no time fetching of the orders.

The consequence was that the difference between us and most popular restaurants was that we kept our popularity. We fed them well, and we served them well; and once the thing had started rolling it didn't stop. Soho isn't so very far away from the centre of things, when you come to look at it, and they didn't mind the extra step, seeing that there was something good at the end of it. So we got our popularity, and we kept our popularity; and we've got it to this day. That's how MacFarland's came to be what it is, mister.

\* \* \* \*

With the air of one who has told a well-rounded tale, Henry ceased, and observed that it was wonderful the way Mr Woodward, of Chelsea, preserved his skill in spite of his advanced years.

I stared at him.

'But, heavens, man!' I cried, 'you surely don't think you've finished? What about Katie and Andy? What happened to them? Did they ever come together again?'

'Oh, ah,' said Henry, 'I was forgetting!'

And he resumed.

\* \* \* \*

As time went on, I begin to get pretty fed up with young Andy. He was making a fortune as fast as any feller could out of the sudden boom in the supper-custom, and he knowing perfectly well that if it hadn't of been for Katie there wouldn't of been any supper-custom at all; and you'd of thought that anyone claiming to be a human being would have

had the gratitood to forgive and forget and go over and say a civil word to Katie when she come in. But no, he just hung round looking black at all of them; and one night he goes and fairly does it.

The place was full that night, and Katie was there, and the piano going, and everybody enjoying themselves, when the young feller at the piano struck up the tune what Katie danced to in the show. Catchy tune it was. 'Lum-tum-tum, tiddle-iddle-um.' Something like that it went. Well, the young feller struck up with it, and everybody begin clapping and hammering on the tables and hollering to Katie to get up and dance; which she done, in an open space in the middle, and she hadn't hardly started when along come young Andy.

He goes up to her, all jaw, and I seen something that wanted dusting on the table next to 'em, so I went up and began dusting it, so by good luck I happened to hear the whole thing.

He says to her, very quiet, 'You can't do that here. What do you think this place is?'

And she says to him, 'Oh, Andy!'

'I'm very much obliged to you,' he says, 'for all the trouble you seem to be taking, but it isn't necessary. MacFarland's got on very well before your well-meant efforts to turn it into a bear-garden.'

And him coining the money from the supper-custom! Sometimes I think gratitood's a thing of the past and this world not fit for a self-respecting rattlesnake to live in.

'Andy!' she says.

'That's all. We needn't argue about it. If you want to come here and have supper, I can't stop you. But I'm not going to have the place turned into a night-club.'

I don't know when I've heard anything like it. If it hadn't of been that I hadn't of got the nerve, I'd have give him a look.

Katie didn't say another word, but just went back to her table.

But the episode, as they say, wasn't conclooded. As soon as the party she was with seen that she was through dancing, they begin to kick up a row; and one young nut with about an inch and a quarter of forehead and the same amount of chin kicked it up especial.

'No, I say! I say, you know!' he hollered. 'That's too bad, you know. Encore! Don't stop. Encore!'

Andy goes up to him.

'I must ask you, please, not to make so much noise,' he says, quite respectful. 'You are disturbing people.'

'Disturbing be damned! Why shouldn't she--'

'One moment. You can make all the noise you please out in the street, but as long as you stay in here you'll be quiet. Do you understand?'

Up jumps the nut. He'd had quite enough to drink. I know, because I'd been serving him.

'Who the devil are you?' he says.

'Sit down,' says Andy.

And the young feller took a smack at him. And the next moment Andy had him by the collar and was chucking him out in a way that would have done credit to a real professional down Whitechapel way. He dumped him on the pavement as neat as you please.

That broke up the party.

You can never tell with restaurants. What kills one makes another. I've no doubt that if we had chucked out a good customer from the Guelph that would have been the end of the place. But it only seemed to do MacFarland's good. I guess it gave just that touch to the place which made the nuts think that this was real Bohemia. Come to think of it, it does give a kind of charm to a place, if you feel that at any moment the feller at the next table to you may be gathered up by the slack of his trousers and slung into the street.

Anyhow, that's the way our supper-custom seemed to look at it; and after that you had to book a table in advance if you wanted to eat with us. They fairly flocked to the place.

But Katie didn't. She didn't flock. She stayed away. And no wonder, after Andy behaving so bad. I'd of spoke to him about it, only he wasn't the kind of feller you do speak to about things.

One day I says to him to cheer him up, 'What price this restaurant now, Mr Andy?'

'Curse the restaurant,' he says.

And him with all that supper-custom! It's a rum world!

Mister, have you ever had a real shock--something that came out of

nowhere and just knocked you flat? I have, and I'm going to tell you about it.

When a man gets to be my age, and has a job of work which keeps him busy till it's time for him to go to bed, he gets into the habit of not doing much worrying about anything that ain't shoved right under his nose. That's why, about now, Katie had kind of slipped my mind. It wasn't that I wasn't fond of the kid, but I'd got so much to think about, what with having four young fellers under me and things being in such a rush at the restaurant that, if I thought of her at all, I just took it for granted that she was getting along all right, and didn't bother. To be sure we hadn't seen nothing of her at MacFarland's since the night when Andy bounced her pal with the small size in foreheads, but that didn't worry me. If I'd been her, I'd have stopped away the same as she done, seeing that young Andy still had his hump. I took it for granted, as I'm telling you, that she was all right, and that the reason we didn't see nothing of her was that she was taking her patronage elsewhere.

And then, one evening, which happened to be my evening off, I got a letter, and for ten minutes after I read it I was knocked flat.

You get to believe in fate when you get to be my age, and fate certainly had taken a hand in this game. If it hadn't of been my evening off, don't you see, I wouldn't have got home till one o'clock or past that in the morning, being on duty. Whereas, seeing it was my evening off, I was back at half past eight.

I was living at the same boarding-house in Bloomsbury what I'd lived at for the past ten years, and when I got there I find her letter shoved half under my door.

I can tell you every word of it. This is how it went:

\_Darling Uncle Bill, \_

\_Don't be too sorry when you read this. It is nobody's fault, but I am just tired of everything, and I want to end it all. You have been such a dear to me always that I want you to be good to me now. I should not like Andy to know the truth, so I want you to make it seem as if it had happened naturally. You will do this for me, won't you? It will be quite easy. By the time you get this, it will be one, and it will all be over, and you can just come up and open the window and let the gas out and then everyone will think I just died naturally. It will be quite easy. I am leaving the door unlocked so that you can get in. I am in the room just above yours. I took it yesterday, so as to be near you. Good-bye, Uncle Bill. You will do it for me, won't you? I don't want Andy to know what it really was. \_



## KATIE

That was it, mister, and I tell you it floored me. And then it come to me, kind of as a new idea, that I'd best do something pretty soon, and up the stairs I went quick.

There she was, on the bed, with her eyes closed, and the gas just beginning to get bad.

As I come in, she jumped up, and stood staring at me. I went to the tap, and turned the flow off, and then I gives her a look.

'Now then,' I says.

'How did you get here?'

'Never mind how I got here. What have you got to say for yourself?'

She just began to cry, same as she used to when she was a kid and someone had hurt her.

'Here,' I says, 'let's get along out of here, and go where there's some air to breathe. Don't you take on so. You come along out and tell me all about it.'

She started to walk to where I was, and suddenly I seen she was limping. So I gave her a hand down to my room, and set her on a chair.

'Now then,' I says again.

'Don't be angry with me, Uncle Bill,' she says.

And she looks at me so pitiful that I goes up to her and puts my arm round her and pats her on the back.

'Don't you worry, dearie,' I says, 'nobody ain't going to be angry with you. But, for goodness' sake,' I says, 'tell a man why in the name of goodness you ever took and acted so foolish.'

'I wanted to end it all.'

'But why?'

She burst out a-crying again, like a kid.

'Didn't you read about it in the paper, Uncle Bill?'

'Read about what in the paper?'

'My accident. I broke my ankle at rehearsal ever so long ago, practising my new dance. The doctors say it will never be right again. I shall never be able to dance any more. I shall always limp. I shan't even be able to walk properly. And when I thought of that ... and Andy ... and everything ... I....'

I got on to my feet.

'Well, well, well,' I says. 'Well, well, well! I don't know as I blame you. But don't you do it. It's a mug's game. Look here, if I leave you alone for half an hour, you won't go trying it on again? Promise.'

'Very well, Uncle Bill. Where are you going?'

'Oh, just out. I'll be back soon. You sit there and rest yourself.'

It didn't take me ten minutes to get to the restaurant in a cab. I found Andy in the back room.

'What's the matter, Henry?' he says.

'Take a look at this,' I says.

There's always this risk, mister, in being the Andy type of feller what must have his own way and goes straight ahead and has it; and that is that when trouble does come to him, it comes with a rush. It sometimes seems to me that in this life we've all got to have trouble sooner or later, and some of us gets it bit by bit, spread out thin, so to speak, and a few of us gets it in a lump--\_biff\_! And that was what happened to Andy, and what I knew was going to happen when I showed him that letter. I nearly says to him, 'Brace up, young feller, because this is where you get it.'

I don't often go to the theatre, but when I do I like one of those plays with some ginger in them which the papers generally cuss. The papers say that real human beings don't carry on in that way. Take it from me, mister, they do. I seen a feller on the stage read a letter once which didn't just suit him; and he gasped and rolled his eyes and tried to say something and couldn't, and had to get a hold on a chair to keep him from falling. There was a piece in the paper saying that this was all wrong, and that he wouldn't of done them things in real life. Believe me, the paper was wrong. There wasn't a thing that feller did that Andy didn't do when he read that letter.

'God!' he says. 'Is she ... She isn't.... Were you in time?' he says.

And he looks at me, and I seen that he had got it in the neck, right enough.

'If you mean is she dead,' I says, 'no, she ain't dead.'

'Thank God!'

'Not yet,' I says.

And the next moment we was out of that room and in the cab and moving quick.

He was never much of a talker, wasn't Andy, and he didn't chat in that cab. He didn't say a word till we was going up the stairs.

'Where?' he says.

'Here,' I says.

And I opens the door.

Katie was standing looking out of the window. She turned as the door opened, and then she saw Andy. Her lips parted, as if she was going to say something, but she didn't say nothing. And Andy, he didn't say nothing, neither. He just looked, and she just looked.

And then he sort of stumbles across the room, and goes down on his knees, and gets his arms around her.

'Oh, my kid' he says.

\* \* \* \* \*

And I seen I wasn't wanted, so I shut the door, and I hopped it. I went and saw the last half of a music-hall. But, I don't know, it didn't kind of have no fascination for me. You've got to give your mind to it to appreciate good music-hall turns.

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## MACLACHAN OF OUR SQUARE

by Samuel Hopkins Adams

from the Project Gutenberg etext of *Our Square and the People In It*

MACLACHAN, the tailor, is as Scotch as his name and as dour as the Scotch. Our Square goes to his Home of Fashion to have its clothes made, repaired, and, on rare and special occasions, pressed, as a matter of local loyalty, which does not in the least imply that it either likes or approves MacLachan. It is, in fact, rather difficult to like him. He has a gray-granite face with a mouth like a snapped spring, toppling brows,

and a nose wrinkled into the expression of one suspicious of all mankind and convinced that his worst suspicions are well founded. He has also the Scotch habit of the oracle, and deals largely in second-hand aphorisms.

Once he had a daughter, a wild-rose girl, who lived over the Home of Fashion with him, and kept him and the place in speckless order. But she is gone, three years since, and in her place MacLachan has only a bitter memory and a devouring shame. What they quarreled about Our Square never knew. The hard-bitten tailor was easy to quarrel with at any time. No information was offered by him, and public opinion in the neighborhood does not favor vain and curious inquiries into another man's family troubles. The night that Meg left, with her gray eyes blazing like two clear flames and her little chin so fiercely set that the dimple disappeared from it totally, MacLachan went out blackly glowering, and came back drunk and singing "The Cork Leg."

What affinity may exist, even in a Scotchman's mind, between that naive and chatty ballad and strong liquor is beyond my imagination. But our dour, sour tailor then and there chose it and has since retained it for the slogan of his spirituous outbreaks, and sings it only when he is, in his own phrase, "a bit drink-taken." The Bonnie Lassie has one of her queer theories that he used to sing Meg to sleep with it when she was a baby. "And that's why, you see," says she. I don't see at all; it seems to me a psychologically unsound theory. Still, some of the unsoundest theories I have ever heard from the Bonnie Lassie's lips have been inexplicably borne out by the facts afterward. When I marvel at this she laughs and says that an old pedagogue who has spent his life with books mustn't expect to understand people.

As for the wild-rose Meg, she passed wholly out of the little, close-knit, secluded world of Our Square. Even those few of us who knew MacLachan and counted ourselves his friends feared to mention her name, not so much because of his known temper as of the haunting pain that grew in his eyes. With the temerity of youth, Henry Groll, one of Meg's many local adorers, and the best second tenor in the Amalgamated Glee Clubs, did put it to the tailor, having come to the Home of Fashion on a matter of international complications, viz., to ascertain whether red Hungarian wine would come out of a French piqué waistcoat.

"By the way, what d'you hear from Meg?" inquired the young man.

"What!". The tailor's heavy shears went off at such a bias across the cloth he was cutting that Lawyer Stedman's coat, when completed, never could be coaxed to set exactly right under the left arm.

"I--I only ast ye," said the visitor, somewhat disconcerted. "What's Meg doin' now?"

Three inches lower--the Little Red Doctor assured Henry a few moments after his ill-advised query, binding up the spot where the flung scissors had struck--and he would never again have sung second tenor nor anything else calling for the employment of intact vocal cords. Henry sent a messenger after the waistcoat. That night MacLachan reeled home bellowing "The Cork Leg" in a voice that brought Terry the Cop bounding across Our Square like a dissuasive antelope.

My one first-hand experience with the ballad of MacLachan's lapse from sobriety was brought about long after through the Bonnie Lassie's procuring. She thrust a sunny head from her studio window and beckoned me from the sidewalk with her modeling tool.

"Dominie, have you seen MacLachan, the tailor, to-day?" she called when she secured my attention.

"No. Is he looking for me?"

"You should be looking for him."

I examined my clothing for possible rents or stains. My sober black was respectable if shiny. The Bonnie Lassie made a gesture of annoyance with the modeling tool which nearly cost her latest creation its head.

"Do you know what day this is?"

"Tuesday, the sev--"

"Don't be a calendar, please! What day is it in MacLachan's life?"

I groped. "Is it his birthday?" (Not that we are much given to celebrating birthdays in Our Square.)

"Oh, you men! You men! I've just telephoned the Little Red Doctor and he didn't know either. It's the second anniversary of the day MacLachan's Meg left him. Do you remember what happened last year, dominie?"

Did I remember! When Lawyer Sted-man had lured me to perjure my immortal soul before a magistrate, who let Mac off only upon the strength of a character sketch (by me) that would have overpraised any one of the Twelve Apostles! I did remember.

"Very well, then. You and the doctor are to take him away this evening. Far away and bring him back sober."

We did our best. And we almost succeeded. For it was close on midnight and Mac was sleepily homebound between us before what he had drunk--against a rising current of our protests--awoke the devil of music in his brain. We were cutting across Second Avenue when he began:

“I'll tell you a story without any sham.  
In Holland there lived Mynheer van Flam,  
Who every morning said: 'I am  
The richest merchant in Rotterdam,  
Ri-tu, di-nu, di-nu--da--na--day!  
Ri-tu, di-nu, di-nay!”

From the shadow of a tree there moved one of those brazen and piteous she-ghosts that haunt the locality. She addressed the three of us with hopeful impartiality. MacLachan shook himself free of our arms and walked close to her, staring strangely into her face.

“I've got a daughter in your line of trade,” he said.

He spoke quietly, but the she-ghost read his eyes. She shrank back trembling, stammered something, and hurried away.

Not until we entered Our Square, after ten minutes of strained silence, did MacLachan look up from the pavement.

“Was there a lassie I spoke to?” he asked vaguely. “What did I say to her?” The Little Red Doctor told him circumstantially. “Personally, I think you're a liar,” he added.

“Do ye?” wistfully answered the tailor, slumping upon a bench. “I take it kind of ye that ye do. But I'm no liar. Once and for all I'll tell ye both. Then ye'll know, and we'll bury it. When my Meg left me I began to die--inside. The last thing in me to die was my pride. When that was dead too--or I thought it so--I set out to seek her. I found her. It was just off Sixth Avenue. In the broad o' the afternoon it was, and there she stood bedizened like yon poor hussy that spoke to us. Raddled with paint too; raddled to the eyes. But the eyes had not changed. They looked at me straight and brave and hard. I had meant well by her, however I might find her. God knows I did! But at the sight of her so, my gorge rose. 'What \_are\_ ye,' says I, 'that ye should come into the light of day wearing shame on yer face?' Her look never wavered--you mind how fearless she always was, dominie--though she must have seen I was near to killing her with my naked hands. 'I'm as you see me. Take me or leave me,' she says. So I left her to go her ways, and I went mine.”

There was a long silence. Then the Little Red Doctor deliberately measured off a short inch on MacLachan's forefinger.

“You're not \_that\_ much of a man, Mac,” said he, and flipped the hand from him. “Do you take him home, dominie; I haven't the stomach for any more of him to-night.”

With any other than the Little Red Doctor it would have been a lasting quarrel. But the official physician and healer of bodies (and souls at

times) to Our Square is too full of other and more important things to find room for resentment. So when, a fortnight later, MacLachan sallied forth to the tune of "The Cork Leg," and came back raving with pneumonia, it was, of course, the Red One who pulled him through it. And in that period of delirium and truth the wise little physician saw deep into the true MacLachan and realized that a spirit as wistful and craving as a child's was beating itself to death against the bars of the dour Scotch tradition of silence and repression.

"He'll kill himself with the drink," said the Little Red Doctor to me after the tailor was restored to the Home of Fashion. "Though I'll stop him if I can. That's my business. Even so, maybe I'll be wrong. For the man's heart is breaking slowly. I've a notion that my old friend, Death, Our Square might do better with the case than I can."

At shorter and ever shortening intervals thereafter the booming baritone rendition of "The Cork Leg" apprised Our Square that the tailor was "on it again." One late August day, as the doctor was passing the Home of Fashion, he heard from behind the closed door the sound of MacLachan's mirthless revelry. He stepped in and found the Scot, cross-legged and with a bottle at his elbow, rocking in time to his own melody while he stylishly braided mine host Schmidt's pants ("trousers" is an effete term not favored by Arbiter MacLachan) for the morrow's picnic and outing of the Pinochle Club:--

"One day when he'd stuffed him as full as an egg  
A poor relation came to beg,  
But he kicked him out without broaching a keg,  
And in kicking him out he broke his own leg.  
Ri-tu, di-nu, di--"

"Shut up, Mac! Stop it."

"I've stopped. You've rooned my music. The noblest song, bar Bobbie Burns--What's yer wish, little mannie?"

"I've some work for you."

"I've no time--"

"It's important. I must surely have it to-morrow."

"Must is a master word, but will not is no man's slave," pronounced MacLachan, the oracle.

"Listen, Mac," pleaded the other. "I've a consultation to-morrow, and I must have my other coat fixed up for it."

"What's wrong wi' the garment?"

"It's--it's ripped: torn across the skirt," floundered the Little Red Doctor, who is a weak, unreliable prevaricator at best.

The dour tailor leaned forward and shook his goose at the visitor. "Peril yer salvation with no more black lies about yer black coat," said he firmly. "It's the drink ye're strivin' to wean me from. But I'm proof against yer strategy, ye pill-an'-pellet Macchiavelli! Ye've no more rip nor tear in yer black coat than I've a ring in my nose."

"Well, I'd have made one, then," returned the shameless doctor.

"Ye'd have wasted time and money. Go yer own gait an' fight yer old friend, Death. But leave me with my friend, the Drink."

"Listen to me, Mac. As sure as you keep it up, just so sure the dissecting-room will get your kidneys and the devil will get your soul."

Carefully setting aside the bottle, MacLachan leaned forward to fasten a claw on the Little Red Doctor's shoulder.

"Do you listen now, and I'll tell ye a secret. While I'm still sober I'll tell it ye, so you'll believe it and fash me no more about the drink. Ye say the devil will get my soul. Ye're a backward prophet, mannie. He's got it. Yes, he's got it, an' another of the same blood to boot. An' all he ever gave me in trade is this," he cried, pointing to the bottle. "So go an' save them as wants it, or stay an' listen:--

"Mr. Doctor, says he, 'now you've done your work.  
By your sharp knife I lose one fork,  
But on two crutches I never will stalk,  
For I'll have a beautiful leg of cork.'"

"Mac."

"Don't delay my work. I've to finish these pants before John Nelson comes to fetch me."

"Who's John Nelson?"

"Friend of my seafarin' days. Now Captain Nelson, if ye please, in the coastwise trade, new back from the deep seas and the roaring trades with a tropical thirst. 'T is he sent me yon messenger," and he indicated the bottle of rum. "Be easy. I'll not come back to Our Square till I'm sober."

"If you do, I'll swear you into Bellevue with my own right hand," declared the Little Red Doctor disgustedly. He slammed the door as he went out.



The next person to open that door was Captain John Nelson. There was a brief ceremonial in which the captain's messenger played an important rôle, the newcomer joined his voice, for old friendship's sake, in the refrain of MacLachan's favorite ballad, and shortly thereafter the twain were seen arm in arm making a straight course across the open for unknown lands. All that we of Our Square had to judge MacLachan's sea comrade by was a stumping gait, a plump figure, a brown and good-humored face, and a most appalling interpretation of the second part in simple harmony.

We were to see him once again, briefly; to hear from his lips the events of that astonishing evening. Of the Odyssey of the sailor and the tailor there is little to be said. Crisscross and back, along Broadway, from Fourteenth Street upward, it ran, coming to a stop shortly before theater-closing time at a small restaurant which, I am told, has a free-and-easy rather than an unsavory repute. There they sat down to a bit of supper, having had, as the captain pathetically stated later, not a bite to eat since dinner at eight o'clock. I still possess the worthy mariner's "chart of the operations," as he terms it, sketched in order that we landlubbers of Our Square might comprehend fully how it all developed. From this masterpiece of cartography I learn that the two friends occupied a side table some halfway down the room, Captain Nelson facing the rear. At the next table back, and therefore directly in his view, sat a couple, the lady spreading so much canvas that she covered all of ninety degrees, whereby the mariner means, I take it, that his neighbor's hat shut off his view of the prospect beyond. Food and drinks being ordered, MacLachan had just leaned back to a discussion of the relative merits of Burns and Garlyle when the orchestra struck into a tune not unlike "The Cork Leg." To the scandal and distress of the captain, MacLachan straightway lifted up his voice:--

"A tinker in Rotterdam, 't would seem,  
Had made cork legs his study and theme,  
Each joint was as strong as an iron beam  
And the springs were a compound of clockwork and steam.  
Ri-tu----

The diplomatic dissuasions of the head waiter, added to the pained and profane protests of his companion, induced the singer to stop at that point. But the lady-under-full-sail arose with a proud, disgusted expression and stalked out, drawing her escort in her wake and uttering loud and refined reflections upon the vulgar environment. Thus was left to Captain Nelson, resuming his seat, a clear view to the far-rear table. This table, he was aesthetically pleased to note, was occupied by a distinctively pretty girl. The girl, as he was humanly affected in perceiving, was exhibiting what, all silly mock modesty apart, he could interpret only as a marked interest in his own romantic and attractive personality.

“What for are you swelling up like a bullpout, John?” inquired his companion, who, having his back turned, had seen nothing of the byplay.

The sailor waved a jaunty hand. “Nothing; nothing at all. It often happens to me. Just a pretty lass in the offing flying signals.”

Without turning, MacLachan made some references of a libelous character concerning a Babylonian lady whose antiquity is the only excuse for her even being mentioned by respectable lips.

“Babylon, Long Island?” queried the captain. “I’ve got an aunt lives there. You think this young lady comes from those parts?”

“How do I know?” growled the tailor, and explained in biting terms that his citation was symbolic, not geographic.

“Hum!” said the seafarer. “She’s a little high-colored, I admit, but that don’t make her what you say. Anyway, I’ll just run down and speak a word of politeness to her. By the time you’ve finished that drink and the next I’ll be back.”

The incognita received Captain Nelson with a direct and unsmiling handshake.

“You know me,” she instructed him under her breath as a waiter came up. “We’re old acquaintances.” Then in full voice: “I hardly recognized you at first. How long is it since I’ve seen you?” Necessity for immediate invention was obviated by the opportune arrival of the waiter. Glancing at the tall, icy glass in front of his new acquaintance, the bold mariner said: “I’ll take the same,” and was considerably disconcerted when the waiter passed along the word: “One lemonade.”

“Now,” said the girl sharply as soon as the waiter had left, “who is your friend that sings?”

“His name’s MacLachan. He’s all right, only--”

“Bring him here.”

“But first can’t I--”

“Bring him here,” repeated the girl inexorably. “I like his voice.”

Sadly the shattered seafarer retraced his course. MacLachan listened, demurred, growled, acquiesced. As the pair walked along, the tailor reeling a bit, the girl was busy searching for something under the table. She did not lift her face until the men were beside her. Then she rose and looked up at MacLachan.

“Dad,” she said.

MacLachan went stark, staring sober in one pulse-beat. But all he said was “Oh!” That is all, I am told, that men say when they are shot through the heart. Nelson slid a chair behind his friend's trembling knees. He sat down. Bending forward, he glared into the garishly splotted face of his daughter and put his hand to his throat, struggling for speech. A door behind closed, and a cheerful, boyish voice said:--

“Hello, little girl. Been waiting long?”

The wild-rose face dimpled and blossomed into sweetness under the layers of paint. “Hello, Jim-boy. Get yourself a chair.”

“Introduce me to your friends,” said the newcomer.

“That one used to be my old dad,” said the girl slowly.

The young man whistled as he drew in his chair. “Quite a family party,” he remarked.

“Who is this?” demanded MacLachan.

“My husband.”

“Your--your husb--” MacLachan took a deep gulp from the lemonade glass which the resourceful captain thoughtfully thrust into his hand. “Why, he--he's a mere laddie. Can he support ye?”

“He's making seventy-five a week every week in the year,” said the girl quietly. “And I'm good for about that average.”

“You? In what trade?” demanded the father slowly and fearfully.

“The movies. Both of us. He's a set designer. I'm an \_ingénue\_. Why else would I be all gommerged up like this” (she touched her cheeks), “not having time to wash off my make-up?”

“How long have ye been in the business?” faltered MacLachan.

“Since I left. It was hard at first.”

“When I saw ye in the street that day--”

She nodded. “Yes; I was just out of rehearsal.”

Then the devil's pride of the Scot, recalling with fierce self-pity his

long heartbreak and loneliness, rose in a flame of resentment and seared the flowering love in his heart.

“Ye gave me no word,” he snarled, rising. “Ye knew I was killing myself for lo--, for shame of ye, and ye let be. What do I owe ye but a curse!”

[Illustration: What do I owe ye but a curse 174]

“That's enough,” said the boy husband; but his voice had become that of a man.

“Dad!” cried the girl.

MacLachan, the dour, turned away. Nelson set a hand on his arm, but he struck it down.

“Oh, Jim-boy!” whispered the girl to her husband. “I can't let him go again.”

He was a youth of resource, that husband; I'm not prepared to say that he didn't have even a touch of genius. “Granddad!” he said.

“Eh?” MacLachan stopped, as if stricken in his tracks.

“What do you think of her?” Jim-boy had produced, quick as conjuring, a little leather-mounted photograph which he held up before MacLachan's eyes. “Did Meg look like her when she was a baby?”

“The varra spit an' image,” cried MacLachan, reverting to his broadest Scotch. Then, with a cry that shook him: “My bairnie!”

Meg went to his arms in a leap.

“And you may believe it or not--I would not, on the oath of a chaplain if I had not seen it with my own eyes,” ran Captain Nelson's subsequent narrative to Our Square, “but I saw the tears on those twin gray rocks that serve MacLachan for cheeks. So I drifted down to leeward and gathered my coat and gave three waiters a quarter each for not staring and came away to tell you. And you'll forgive me for waking the two of you up, and it gone eight bells--I mean midnight--but that was Mac's last word as I left, that I was to tell you. He said you'd be glad.”

Glad we were, and all Our Square joined in the gladness, for it was a changed and softened MacLachan that came back to us, sober and strangely, gently awkward, the next day after a night spent with “my family.”

“Ye'll not see me drink-taken again,” he promised the Little Red Doctor.

That good word went swiftly. Consequently it was the greater shock when, on the very next Thursday afternoon, several of us who had run into the Bonnie Lassie's studio for tea and the weekly inspection of ourselves as mirrored in her work, heard in the familiar rumbling baritone from the open park space:--

“Horror and fright were in his face,  
The neighbors thought he was running a race,  
He clung to a lamp-post to stay his pace,  
But the leg broke away and kept up the chase,  
Ri-tu, di-nu, di-nu--di--na--day!  
Ri-tu, di-nu, di-nay!”

“My God!” cried the Little Red Doctor in consternation. “Mac's off again.”

He jumped up, but the Bonnie Lassie was quicker. “Let me get him,” she said, and ran from the room.

Almost at once she was back, her face quivering. “Come and look!” she bade us.

We crowded the front windows. On a bench in Our Square slouched a thin, hard, angular figure, terminating in a thin, hard, angular face, at the moment wide open and pouring forth unabashed melody for the apparent benefit of a much befrilled vehicle, which was being propelled back and forth by a thin, long leg. MacLachan was entertaining his granddaughter.

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## A DESERT EPISODE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Day and Night Stories*, by Algernon Blackwood

1

"Better put wraps on now. The sun's getting low," a girl said.

It was the end of a day's expedition in the Arabian Desert, and they were having tea. A few yards away the donkeys munched their \_barsim\_ ; beside them in the sand the boys lay finishing bread and jam. Immense, with gliding tread, the sun's rays slid from crest to crest of the limestone ridges that broke the huge expanse towards the Red Sea. By the time the tea-things were packed the sun hovered, a giant ball of red, above the Pyramids. It stood in the western sky a moment, looking out of its majestic hood across the sand. With a movement almost visible it leaped, paused, then leaped again. It seemed to bound towards the horizon; then, suddenly, was gone.

"It is cold, yes," said the painter, Rivers. And all who heard looked up at him because of the way he said it. A hurried movement ran through the merry party, and the girls were on their donkeys quickly, not wishing to be left to bring up the rear. They clattered off. The boys cried; the thud of sticks was heard; hoofs shuffled through the sand and stones. In single file the picnickers headed for Helouan, some five miles distant. And the desert closed up behind them as they went, following in a shadowy wave that never broke, noiseless, foamless, unstreaked, driven by no wind, and of a volume undiscoverable. Against the orange sunset the Pyramids turned deep purple. The strip of silvery Nile among its palm trees looked like rising mist. In the incredible Egyptian afterglow the enormous horizons burned a little longer, then went out. The ball of the earth--a huge round globe that bulged--curved visibly as at sea. It was no longer a flat expanse; it turned. Its splendid curves were realised.

"Better put wraps on; it's cold and the sun is low"--and then the curious hurry to get back among the houses and the haunts of men. No more was said, perhaps, than this, yet, the time and place being what they were, the mind became suddenly aware of that quality which ever brings a certain shrinking with it--vastness; and more than vastness: that which is endless because it is also beginningless--eternity. A colossal splendour stole upon the heart, and the senses, unaccustomed to the unusual stretch, reeled a little, as though the wonder was more than could be faced with comfort. Not all, doubtless, realised it, though to two, at least, it came with a staggering impact there was no withstanding. For, while the luminous greys and purples crept round them from the sandy wastes, the hearts of these two became aware of certain common things whose simple majesty is usually dulled by mere familiarity. Neither the man nor the girl knew for certain that the other felt it, as they brought up the rear together; yet the fact that each did feel it set them side by side in the same strange circle--and made them silent. They realised the immensity of a moment: the dizzy stretch of time that led up to the casual pinning of a veil; to the tightening of a stirrup strap; to the little speech with a companion; the roar of the vanished centuries that have ground mountains into sand and spread them over the floor of Africa; above all, to the little truth that they themselves existed amid the whirl of stupendous systems all delicately balanced as a spider's web--that they were alive.

For a moment this vast scale of reality revealed itself, then hid swiftly again behind the débris of the obvious. The universe, containing their two tiny yet important selves, stood still for an instant before their eyes. They looked at it--realised that they belonged to it. Everything moved and had its being, lived--here in this silent, empty desert even more actively than in a city of crowded houses. The quiet Nile, sighing with age, passed down towards the sea;

there loomed the menacing Pyramids across the twilight; beneath them, in monstrous dignity, crouched that Shadow from whose eyes of battered stone proceeds the nameless thing that contracts the heart, then opens it again to terror; and everywhere, from towering monoliths as from secret tombs, rose that strange, long whisper which, defying time and distance, laughs at death. The spell of Egypt, which is the spell of immortality, touched their hearts.

Already, as the group of picnickers rode homewards now, the first stars twinkled overhead, and the peerless Egyptian night was on the way. There was hurry in the passing of the dusk. And the cold sensibly increased.

"So you did no painting after all," said Rivers to the girl who rode a little in front of him, "for I never saw you touch your sketch-book once."

They were some distance now behind the others; the line straggled; and when no answer came he quickened his pace, drew up alongside and saw that her eyes, in the reflection of the sunset, shone with moisture. But she turned her head a little, smiling into his face, so that the human and the non-human beauty came over him with an onset that was almost shock. Neither one nor other, he knew, were long for him, and the realisation fell upon him with a pang of actual physical pain. The acuteness, the hopelessness of the realisation, for a moment, were more than he could bear, stern of temper though he was, and he tried to pass in front of her, urging his donkey with resounding strokes. Her own animal, however, following the lead, at once came up with him.

"You felt it, perhaps, as I did," he said some moments later, his voice quite steady again. "The stupendous, everlasting thing--the-- life behind it all." He hesitated a little in his speech, unable to find the substantive that could compass even a fragment of his thought. She paused, too, similarly inarticulate before the surge of incomprehensible feelings.

"It's--awful," she said, half laughing, yet the tone hushed and a little quaver in it somewhere. And her voice to his was like the first sound he had ever heard in the world, for the first sound a full-grown man heard in the world would be beyond all telling--magical. "I shall not try again," she continued, leaving out the laughter this time; "my sketch-book is a farce. For, to tell the truth"--and the next three words she said below her breath--"I dare not."

He turned and looked at her for a second. It seemed to him that the following wave had caught them up, and was about to break above her, too. But the big-brimmed hat and the streaming veil shrouded her features. He saw, instead, the Universe. He felt as though he and she had always, always been together, and always, always would be.

Separation was inconceivable.

"It came so close," she whispered. "It--shook me!"

They were cut off from their companions, whose voices sounded far ahead. Her words might have been spoken by the darkness, or by some one who peered at them from within that following wave. Yet the fanciful phrase was better than any he could find. From the immeasurable space of time and distance men's hearts vainly seek to plumb, it drew into closer perspective a certain meaning that words may hardly compass, a formidable truth that belongs to that deep place where hope and doubt fight their incessant battle. The awe she spoke of was the awe of immortality, of belonging to something that is endless and beginningless.

And he understood that the tears and laughter were one--caused by that spell which takes a little human life and shakes it, as an animal shakes its prey that later shall feed its blood and increase its power of growth. His other thoughts--really but a single thought--he had not the right to utter. Pain this time easily routed hope as the wave came nearer. For it was the wave of death that would shortly break, he knew, over him, but not over her. Him it would sweep with its huge withdrawal into the desert whence it came: her it would leave high upon the shores of life--alone. And yet the separation would somehow not be real. They were together in eternity even now. They were endless as this desert, beginningless as this sky ... immortal. The realisation overwhelmed....

The lights of Helouan seemed to come no nearer as they rode on in silence for the rest of the way. Against the dark background of the Mokattam Hills these fairy lights twinkled brightly, hanging in mid-air, but after an hour they were no closer than before. It was like riding towards the stars. It would take centuries to reach them. There were centuries in which to do so. Hurry has no place in the desert; it is born in streets. The desert stands still; to go fast in it is to go backwards. Now, in particular, its enormous, uncanny leisure was everywhere--in keeping with that mighty scale the sunset had made visible. His thoughts, like the steps of the weary animal that bore him, had no progress in them. The serpent of eternity, holding its tail in its own mouth, rose from the sand, enclosing himself, the stars--and her. Behind him, in the hollows of that shadowy wave, the procession of dynasties and conquests, the great series of gorgeous civilisations the mind calls Past, stood still, crowded with shining eyes and beckoning faces, still waiting to arrive. There is no death in Egypt. His own death stood so close that he could touch it by stretching out his hand, yet it seemed as much behind as in front of him. What man called a beginning was a trick. There was no such thing. He was with this girl--\_now\_, when Death waited so close for him--yet he had never really begun. Their lives ran always parallel. The hand he stretched to clasp approaching death caught instead in this girl's shadowy hair,



drawing her in with him to the centre where he breathed the eternity of the desert. Yet expression of any sort was as futile as it was unnecessary. To paint, to speak, to sing, even the slightest gesture of the soul, became a crude and foolish thing. Silence was here the truth. And they rode in silence towards the fairy lights.

Then suddenly the rocky ground rose up close before them; boulders stood out vividly with black shadows and shining heads; a flat-roofed house slid by; three palm trees rattled in the evening wind; beyond, a mosque and minaret sailed upwards, like the spars and rigging of some phantom craft; and the colonnades of the great modern hotel, standing upon its dome of limestone ridge, loomed over them. Helouan was about them before they knew it. The desert lay behind with its huge, arrested billow. Slowly, owing to its prodigious volume, yet with a speed that merged it instantly with the far horizon behind the night, this wave now withdrew a little. There was no hurry. It came, for the moment, no farther. Rivers knew. For he was in it to the throat. Only his head was above the surface. He still could breathe--and speak--and see. Deepening with every hour into an incalculable splendour, it waited.

2

In the street the foremost riders drew rein, and, two and two abreast, the long line clattered past the shops and cafés, the railway station and hotels, stared at by the natives from the busy pavements. The donkeys stumbled, blinded by the electric light. Girls in white dresses flitted here and there, arabiyehs rattled past with people hurrying home to dress for dinner, and the evening train, just in from Cairo, disgorged its stream of passengers. There were dances in several of the hotels that night. Voices rose on all sides. Questions and answers, engagements and appointments were made, little plans and plots and intrigues for seizing happiness on the wing--before the wave rolled in and caught the lot. They chattered gaily:

"You \_are\_ going, aren't you? You promised----"

"Of course I am."

"Then I'll drive you over. May I call for you?"

"All right. Come at ten."

"We shan't have finished our bridge by then. Say ten-thirty."

And eyes exchanged their meaning signals. The group dismounted and dispersed. Arabs standing under the lebbekh trees, or squatting on the pavements before their dim-lit booths, watched them with faces of gleaming bronze. Rivers gave his bridle to a donkey-boy, and moved

across stiffly after the long ride to help the girl dismount. "You feel tired?" he asked gently. "It's been a long day." For her face was white as chalk, though the eyes shone brilliantly.

"Tired, perhaps," she answered, "but exhilarated too. I should like to be there now. I should like to go back this minute--if some one would take me." And, though she said it lightly, there was a meaning in her voice he apparently chose to disregard. It was as if she knew his secret. "Will you take me--some day soon?"

The direct question, spoken by those determined little lips, was impossible to ignore. He looked close into her face as he helped her from the saddle with a spring that brought her a moment half into his arms. "Some day--soon. I will," he said with emphasis, "when you are--ready." The pallor in her face, and a certain expression in it he had not known before, startled him. "I think you have been overdoing it," he added, with a tone in which authority and love were oddly mingled, neither of them disguised.

"Like yourself," she smiled, shaking her skirts out and looking down at her dusty shoes. "I've only a few days more--before I sail. We're both in such a hurry, but you are the worst of the two."

"Because my time is even shorter," ran his horrified thought--for he said no word.

She raised her eyes suddenly to his, with an expression that for an instant almost convinced him she had guessed--and the soul in him stood rigidly at attention, urging back the rising fires. The hair had dropped loosely round the sun-burned neck. Her face was level with his shoulder. Even the glare of the street lights could not make her undesirable. But behind the gaze of the deep brown eyes another thing looked forth imperatively into his own. And he recognised it with a rush of terror, yet of singular exultation.

"It followed us all the way," she whispered. "It came after us from the desert--where it \_lives\_."

"At the houses," he said equally low, "it stopped." He gladly adopted her syncopated speech, for it helped him in his struggle to subdue those rising fires.

For a second she hesitated. "You mean, if we had not left so soon--when it turned cold. If we had not hurried--if we had remained a little longer----"

He caught at her hand, unable to control himself, but dropped it again the same second, while she made as though she had not noticed, forgiving him with her eyes. "Or a great deal longer," she added

slowly--"for ever?"

And then he was certain that she \_had\_ guessed--not that he loved her above all else in the world, for that was so obvious that a child might know it, but that his silence was due to his other, lesser secret; that the great Executioner stood waiting to drop the hood about his eyes. He was already pinioned. Something in her gaze and in her manner persuaded him suddenly that she understood.

His exhilaration increased extraordinarily. "I mean," he said very quietly, "that the spell weakens here among the houses and among the--so-called living." There was masterfulness, triumph, in his voice. Very wonderfully he saw her smile change; she drew slightly closer to his side, as though unable to resist. "Mingled with lesser things we should not understand completely," he added softly.

"And that might be a mistake, you mean?" she asked quickly, her face grave again.

It was his turn to hesitate a moment. The breeze stirred the hair about her neck, bringing its faint perfume--perfume of young life--to his nostrils. He drew his breath in deeply, smothering back the torrent of rising words he knew were unpermissible. "Misunderstanding," he said briefly. "If the eye be single----" He broke off, shaken by a paroxysm of coughing. "You know my meaning," he continued, as soon as the attack had passed; "you feel the difference \_here\_," pointing round him to the hotels, the shops, the busy stream of people; "the hurry, the excitement, the feverish, blinding child's play which pretends to be alive, but does not know it----" And again the coughing stopped him. This time she took his hand in her own, pressed it very slightly, then released it. He felt it as the touch of that desert wave upon his soul. "The reception must be in complete and utter resignation. Tainted by lesser things, the disharmony might be----" he began stammeringly.

Again there came interruption, as the rest of the party called impatiently to know if they were coming up to the hotel. He had not time to find the completing adjective. Perhaps he could not find it ever. Perhaps it does not exist in any modern language. Eternity is not realised to-day; men have no time to know they are alive for ever; they are too busy....

They all moved in a clattering, merry group towards the big hotel. Rivers and the girl were separated.

There was a dance that evening, but neither of these took part in it. In the great dining-room their tables were far apart. He could

not even see her across the sea of intervening heads and shoulders. The long meal over, he went to his room, feeling it imperative to be alone. He did not read, he did not write; but, leaving the light unlit, he wrapped himself up and leaned out upon the broad window-sill into the great Egyptian night. His deep-sunken thoughts, like to the crowding stars, stood still, yet for ever took new shapes. He tried to see behind them, as, when a boy, he had tried to see behind the constellations--out into space--where there is nothing.

Below him the lights of Helouan twinkled like the Pleiades reflected in a pool of water; a hum of queer soft noises rose to his ears; but just beyond the houses the desert stood at attention, the vastest thing he had ever known, very stern, yet very comforting, with its peace beyond all comprehension, its delicate, wild terror, and its awful message of immortality. And the attitude of his mind, though he did not know it, was one of prayer.... From time to time he went to lie on the bed with paroxysms of coughing. He had overtaxed his strength--his swiftly fading strength. The wave had risen to his lips.

Nearer forty than thirty-five, Paul Rivers had come out to Egypt, plainly understanding that with the greatest care he might last a few weeks longer than if he stayed in England. A few more times to see the sunset and the sunrise, to watch the stars, feel the soft airs of earth upon his cheeks; a few more days of intercourse with his kind, asking and answering questions, wearing the old familiar clothes he loved, reading his favourite pages, and then--out into the big spaces--where there is nothing.

Yet no one, from his stalwart, energetic figure, would have guessed--no one but the expert mind, not to be deceived, to whom in the first attack of overwhelming despair and desolation he went for final advice. He left that house, as many had left it before, knowing that soon he would need no earthly protection of roof and walls, and that his soul, if it existed, would be shelterless in the space behind all manifested life. He had looked forward to fame and position in this world; had, indeed, already achieved the first step towards this end; and now, with the vanity of all earthly aims so mercilessly clear before him, he had turned, in somewhat of a nervous, concentrated hurry, to make terms with the Infinite while still the brain was there. And had, of course, found nothing. For it takes a lifetime crowded with experiment and effort to learn even the alphabet of genuine faith; and what could come of a few weeks' wild questioning but confusion and bewilderment of mind? It was inevitable. He came out to Egypt wondering, thinking, questioning, but chiefly wondering. He had grown, that is, more childlike, abandoning the futile tool of Reason, which hitherto had seemed to him the perfect instrument. Its foolishness stood naked before him in the pitiless light of the specialist's decision. For--"Who can by searching find out God?"

To be exceedingly careful of over-exertion was the final warning he brought with him, and, within a few hours of his arrival, three weeks ago, he had met this girl and utterly disregarded it. He took it somewhat thus: "Instead of lingering I'll enjoy myself and go out--a little sooner. I'll live. The time is very short." His was not a nature, anyhow, that could heed a warning. He could not kneel. Upright and unflinching, he went to meet things as they came, reckless, unwise, but certainly not afraid. And this characteristic operated now. He ran to meet Death full tilt in the uncharted spaces that lay behind the stars. With love for a companion now, he raced, his speed increasing from day to day, she, as he thought, knowing merely that he sought her, but had not guessed his darker secret that was now his lesser secret.

And in the desert, this afternoon of the picnic, the great thing he sped to meet had shown itself with its familiar touch of appalling cold and shadow, familiar, because all minds know of and accept it; appalling because, until realised close, and with the mental power at the full, it remains but a name the heart refuses to believe in. And he had discovered that its name was--Life.

Rivers had seen the Wave that sweeps incessant, tireless, but as a rule invisible, round the great curve of the bulging earth, brushing the nations into the deeps behind. It had followed him home to the streets and houses of Helouan. He saw it now, as he leaned from his window, dim and immense, too huge to break. Its beauty was nameless, undecipherable. His coughing echoed back from the wall of its great sides.... And the music floated up at the same time from the ball-room in the opposite wing. The two sounds mingled. Life, which is love, and Death, which is their unchanging partner, held hands beneath the stars.

He leaned out farther to drink in the cool, sweet air. Soon, on this air, his body would be dust, driven, perhaps, against her very cheek, trodden on possibly by her little foot--until, in turn, she joined him too, blown by the same wind loose about the desert. True. Yet at the same time they would always be together, always somewhere side by side, continuing in the vast universe, alive. This new, absolute conviction was in him now. He remembered the curious, sweet perfume in the desert, as of flowers, where yet no flowers are. It was the perfume of life. But in the desert there is no life. Living things that grow and move and utter, are but a protest against death. In the desert they are unnecessary, because death there is not. Its overwhelming vitality needs no insolent, visible proof, no protest, no challenge, no little signs of life. The message of the desert is immortality....

He went finally to bed, just before midnight. Hovering magnificently just outside his window, Death watched him while he slept. The wave crept to the level of his eyes. He called her name....

\* \* \* \*

And downstairs, meanwhile, the girl, knowing nothing, wondered where he was, wondered unhappily and restlessly; more--though this she did not understand--wondered motheringly. Until to-day, on the ride home, and from their singular conversation together, she had guessed nothing of his reason for being at Helouan, where so many come in order to find life. She only knew her own. And she was but twenty-five....

Then, in the desert, when that touch of unearthly chill had stolen out of the sand towards sunset, she had realised clearly, astonished she had not seen it long ago, that this man loved her, yet that something prevented his obeying the great impulse. In the life of Paul Rivers, whose presence had profoundly stirred her heart the first time she saw him, there was some obstacle that held him back, a barrier his honour must respect. He could never tell her of his love. It could lead to nothing. Knowing that he was not married, her intuition failed her utterly at first. Then, in their silence on the homeward ride, the truth had somehow pressed up and touched her with its hand of ice. In that disjointed conversation at the end, which reads as it sounded, as though no coherent meaning lay behind the words, and as though both sought to conceal by speech what yet both burned to utter, she had divined his darker secret, and knew that it was the same as her own. She understood then it was Death that had tracked them from the desert, following with its gigantic shadow from the sandy wastes. The cold, the darkness, the silence which cannot answer, the stupendous mystery which is the spell of its inscrutable Presence, had risen about them in the dusk, and kept them company at a little distance, until the lights of Helouan had bade it halt. Life which may not, cannot end, had frightened her.

His time, perhaps, was even shorter than her own. None knew his secret, since he was alone in Egypt and was caring for himself. Similarly, since she bravely kept her terror to herself, her mother had no inkling of her own, aware merely that the disease was in her system and that her orders were to be extremely cautious. This couple, therefore, shared secretly together the two clearest glimpses of eternity life has to offer to the soul. Side by side they looked into the splendid eyes of Love and Death. Life, moreover, with its instinct for simple and terrific drama, had produced this majestic climax, breaking with pathos, at the very moment when it could not be developed--this side of the stars. They stood together upon the stage, a stage emptied of other human players; the audience had gone home and the lights were being lowered; no music sounded; the critics were a-bed. In this great game of Consequences it was known where he met her, what he said and what she answered, possibly what they did and even what the world thought. But "what the consequence was" would remain unknown, untold. That would happen in the big spaces of which the desert in its silence, its motionless serenity, its shelterless, intolerable vastness, is the perfect symbol. And the desert gives no answer. It sounds no challenge,

for it is complete. Life in the desert makes no sign. It \_is\_.

4

In the hotel that night there arrived by chance a famous International dancer, whose dahabîyeh lay anchored at San Giovanni, in the Nile below Helouan; and this woman, with her party, had come to dine and take part in the festivities. The news spread. After twelve the lights were lowered, and while the moonlight flooded the terraces, streaming past pillar and colonnade, she rendered in the shadowed halls the music of the Masters, interpreting with an instinctive genius messages which are eternal and divine.

Among the crowd of enthralled and delighted guests, the girl sat on the steps and watched her. The rhythmical interpretation held a power that seemed, in a sense, inspired; there lay in it a certain unconscious something that was pure, unearthly; something that the stars, wheeling in stately movements over the sea and desert know; something the great winds bring to mountains where they play together; something the forests capture and fix magically into their gathering of big and little branches. It was both passionate and spiritual, wild and tender, intensely human and seductively non-human. For it was original, taught of Nature, a revelation of naked, unhampered life. It comforted, as the desert comforts. It brought the desert awe into the stuffy corridors of the hotel, with the moonlight and the whispering of stars, yet behind it ever the silence of those grey, mysterious, interminable spaces which utter to themselves the wordless song of life. For it was the same dim thing, she felt, that had followed her from the desert several hours before, halting just outside the streets and houses as though blocked from further advance; the thing that had stopped her foolish painting, skilled though she was, because it hides behind colour and not in it; the thing that veiled the meaning in the cryptic sentences she and he had stammered out together; the thing, in a word, as near as she could approach it by any means of interior expression, that the realisation of death for the first time makes comprehensible--Immortality. It was unutterable, but it \_was\_. He and she were indissolubly together. Death was no separation. There was no death.... It was terrible. It was--she had already used the word--awful, full of awe.

"In the desert," thought whispered, as she watched spellbound, "it is impossible even to conceive of death. The idea is meaningless. It simply is not."

The music and the movement filled the air with life which, being there, must continue always, and continuing always can have never had a beginning. Death, therefore, was the great revealer of life. Without it none could realise that they are alive. Others had discovered this

before her, but she did not know it. In the desert no one can realise death: it is hope and life that are the only certainty. The entire conception of the Egyptian system was based on this--the conviction, sure and glorious, of life's endless continuation. Their tombs and temples, their pyramids and sphinxes surviving after thousands of years, defy the passage of time and laugh at death; the very bodies of their priests and kings, of their animals even, their fish, their insects, stand to-day as symbols of their stalwart knowledge.

And this girl, as she listened to the music and watched the inspired dancing, remembered it. The message poured into her from many sides, though the desert brought it clearest. With death peering into her face a few short weeks ahead, she thought instead of--life. The desert, as it were, became for her a little fragment of eternity, focused into an intelligible point for her mind to rest upon with comfort and comprehension. Her steady, thoughtful nature stirred towards an objective far beyond the small enclosure of one narrow lifetime. The scale of the desert stretched her to the grandeur of its own imperial meaning, its divine repose, its unassailable and everlasting majesty. She looked beyond the wall.

Eternity! That which is endless; without pause, without beginning, without divisions or boundaries. The fluttering of her brave yet frightened spirit ceased, aware with awe of its own everlastingness. The swiftest motion produces the effect of immobility; excessive light is darkness; size, run loose into enormity, is the same as the minutely tiny. Similarly, in the desert, life, too overwhelming and terrific to know limit or confinement, lies undetailed and stupendous, still as deity, a revelation of nothingness because it is all. Turned golden beneath its spell that the music and the rhythm made even more comprehensible, the soul in her, already lying beneath the shadow of the great wave, sank into rest and peace, too certain of itself to fear. And panic fled away. "I am immortal ... because I am . And what I love is not apart from me. It is myself. We are together endlessly because we are ."

Yet in reality, though the big desert brought this, it was Love, which, being of similar parentage, interpreted its vast meaning to her little heart--that sudden love which, without a word of preface or explanation, had come to her a short three weeks before.... She went up to her room soon after midnight, abruptly, unexpectedly stricken. Some one, it seemed, had called her name. She passed his door.

The lights had been turned up. The clamour of praise was loud round the figure of the weary dancer as she left in a carriage for her dahabiyeh on the Nile. A low wind whistled round the walls of the great hotel, blowing chill and bitter between the pillars of the colonnades. The girl heard the voices float up to her through the night, and once more, behind the confused sound of the many, she heard her own name called,



but more faintly than before, and from very far away. It came through the spaces beyond her open window; it died away again; then--but for the sighing of that bitter wind--silence, the deep silence of the desert.

And these two, Paul Rivers and the girl, between them merely a floor of that stone that built the Pyramids, lay a few moments before the Wave of Sleep engulfed them. And, while they slept, two shadowy forms hovered above the roof of the quiet hotel, melting presently into one, as dreams stole down from the desert and the stars. Immortality whispered to them. On either side rose Life and Death, towering in splendour. Love, joining their spreading wings, fused the gigantic outlines into one. The figures grew smaller, comprehensible. They entered the little windows. Above the beds they paused a moment, watching, waiting, and then, like a wave that is just about to break, they stooped....

And in the brilliant Egyptian sunlight of the morning, as she went downstairs, she passed his door again. She had awakened, but he slept on. He had preceded her. It was next day she learned his room was vacant.... Within the month she joined him, and within the year the cool north wind that sweetens Lower Egypt from the sea blew the dust across the desert as before. It is the dust of kings, of queens, of priests, princesses, lovers. It is the dust no earthly power can annihilate. It, too, lasts for ever. There was a little more of it ... the desert's message slightly added to: Immortality.

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## THE MOON, THE MAID, AND THE WINGED SHOES

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Laughing Bill Hyde and Other Stories*, by Rex Beach

The last place I locked wheels with Mike Butters was in Idaho. I'd just sold a silver-lead prospect and was proclaimin' my prosperity with soundin' brass and ticklin' symbols. I was tuned up to G and singin' quartettes with the bartender--opery buffet, so to speak--when in Mike walked. It was a bright morning out-side and I didn't reco'nize him at first against the sunlight.

"Where's that cholera-morbus case?" said he.

"Stranger, them ain't sounds of cramps," I told him. "It's me singin' 'Hell Amongst the Yearlin's.'" Then I seen who he was and I fell among him.

When we'd abated ourselves I looked him over.

"What you doin' in all them good clothes?" I inquired.

"I'm a D.D.S."

"Do tell! All I ever took was the first three degrees. Gimme the grip and the password and I'll believe you."

"That ain't a Masonic symbol," said he. "I'm a dentist--a bony fido dentist, with forceps and a little furnace and a gas-bag and a waitin'-rooms". He swelled up and bit a hang-nail off of his cigar.

"Yep! A regular toothwright."

Naturally I was surprised, not to say awed. "Have you got much of a practice?" I made bold to ask.

"Um-m--It ain't what it ought to be, still I can't complain. It takes time to work into a fashionable clientele. All I get a whack at now is Injuns, but I'm gradually beginnin' to close in on the white teeth."

Now this was certainly news to me, for Mike was a foot-racer, and a good one, too, and the last time I'd seen him he didn't know nothing about teeth, except that if you ain't careful they'll bite your tongue. I figured he was lyin', so I said:

"Where did you get your degree--off of a thermometer?"

"Nothing of the tall. I run it down. I did, for a God's fact. It's like this: three months ago I crep' into this burg lookin' for a match, but the professions was overcrowded, there bein' fourteen lawyers, a half-dozen doctors, a chiropodist, and forty-three bartenders here ahead of me, not to speak of a tooth-tinker. That there dentist thought he could sprint. He come from some Eastern college and his pa had grub-staked him to a kit of tools and sent him out here to work his way into the confidences and cavities of the Idahobos.

"Well, sir, the minute I seen him I realized he was my custard. He wore sofy cushions on his shoulders, and his coat was cut in at the back. He rolled up his pants, too, and sometimes he sweetened the view in a vi'lent, striped sweater. I watered at the mouth and picked my teeth over him--he was that succ'lent.

"He'd been lookin' down on these natives and kiddin' 'em ever since he arrived, and once a week, reg'lar, he tried to frame a race so's he could wear his runnin'-pants and be a hero. I had no trouble fixin' things. He was a good little runner, and he done his best; but when I breasted the tape I won a quick-claim deed to his loose change, to a brand-new office over a drug-store, and to enough nickel-plated pliers

for a wire-tapper. I staked him to a sleeper ticket, then I moved into his quarters. The tools didn't have no directions on 'em, but I've figgered out how to use most of 'em."

"I gather that this here practice that you're buildin' up ain't exactly remunerative," I said to Mike.

"Not yet it ain't, but I'm widenin' out. There ain't a day passes that I don't learn something. I was out drummin' up a little trade when your groans convinced me that somebody in here had a jumpin' toothache. If you ain't busy, mebbe you can help me get a patient."

This particular saloon had about wore out its welcome with me, so I was game for any enterprise, and I allowed a little patient-huntin' would prob'ly do me good. I drew my six gun and looked her over.

"It's a new sport, but I bet I'll take to it," said I. "What d'you do, crease 'em or cripple 'em?"

"Pshaw! Put up that hearse ticket," Mike told me. "Us doctors don't take human life, we save it."

"I thought you said you was practisin' on Injuns."

"Injuns is human. For a fact! I've learned a heap in this business. Not that I wouldn't bust one if I needed him, but it ain't necessary. Come, I'll show you."

This here town had more heathens than whites in it, and before we'd gone a block I seen a buck Injun and his squaw idlin' along, lookin' into the store winders. The buck was a hungry, long-legged feller, and when we neared him Mike said to me:

"Hist! There's one. I'll slip up and get him from behind. You grab him if he runs."

This method of buildin' up a dental practice struck me as some strange, but Butters was a queer guy and this was sort of a rough town. When he got abreast of Mr. Lo, Mike reached out and garnered him by the neck. The Injun pitched some, but Mike eared him down finally, and when I come up I seen that one side of the lad's face was swelled up something fearful.

"Well, well," said I. "You've sure got the dentist's eye. You must have spied that swellin' a block away."

Mike nodded, then he said: "Poor feller! I'll bet it aches horrible. My office is right handy; let's get him in before the marshal sees us."

We drug the savage up-stairs and into Mike's dental stable, then we bedded him down in a chair. He protested considerable, but we got him there in a tollable state of preservation, barring the fact that he was skinned up on the corners and we had pulled a hinge off from the office door.

"It's a shame for a person to suffer thataway," Mike told me; "but these ignorant aborigines ain't educated up to the mercies of science. Just put your knee in his stummick, will you? What could be finer than to alleviate pain? The very thought in itself is elevatin'. I'm in this humanity business for life--Grab his feet quick or he'll kick out the winder."

"Whoa!" I told the Injun. "Plenty fix-um!" I poked the swellin' on his face and he let out a yelp.

"It's lucky we got him before multiplication set in," Mike assured me. "I lay for 'em that-away at the foot of the stairs every day; but this is the best patient I've had. I've a notion to charge this one."

"Don't you charge all of 'em?" I wanted to know.

"Nope. I got a tin watch off of one patient when he was under gas, but the most of 'em ain't worth goin' through. You got to do a certain amount of charity work."

"Don't look like much of a business to me," I said.

"There's something about it I like," Mike told me. "It sort of grows on a feller. Now that you're here to help catch 'em, I calc'late to acquire a lot of skill with these instruments. I've been playin' a lone hand and I've had to take little ones that I could handle."

When Mike produced a pair of nickel-plated nail-pullers, Mr. Injun snorted like a sea-lion, and it took both of us to hold him down; but finally I tied his hair around the head-rest and we had him. His mane was long and I put a hard knot in it, then I set on his moccasins while Doctor Butters pried into his innermost secrets.

"There she is--that big one." Mike pointed out a tooth that looked like the corner monument to a quartz claim.

"You're on the wrong side," I told him.

"Mebbe I am. Here's one that looks like it would come loose easier." Mike got a half-Nelson over in the east-half-east quarter-section of the buck's mouth and throwed his weight on the pliers.

The Injun had pretty well wore himself out by this time, and when he felt those ice-tongs he just stiffened out--an Injun's dead game that-away; he won't make a holler when you hurt him. His squaw was hangin' around with her eyes poppin' out, but we didn't pay no attention to her.

Somehow Mike's pinchers kept jumpin' the track and at every slip a new wrinkle showed in the patient's face--patient is the right word, all right--and we didn't make no more show at loosenin' that tusk than as if we'd tried to pull up Mount Bill Williams with a silk thread. At last two big tears come into the buck's eyes and rolled down his cheeks. First time I ever seen one cry.

Now that weakness was plumb fatal to him, for right there and then he cracked his plate with his missus. Yes, sir, he tore his shirt-waist proper. The squaw straightened up and give him a look--oh, what a look!

"Waugh!" she sniffed. "Injun heap big squaw!" And with that she swished out of the office and left him flat. Yes, sir, she just blew him on the spot.

I s'pose Mike would have got that tooth somehow--he's a perseverin' party--only that I happened to notice something queer and called him off.

"Here, wait a minute," said I, and I loosened him from the man's chest. Mike was so engorsed in the pursuit of his profession that he was astraddle of his patient's wishbone, gougin' away like a quartz miner. "Take your elbow out of his mouth and lemme talk to him a minute." When the savage had got his features together, I said to him, "How you catch um bump, hey?" And I pointed to his jaw.

"Bzz-zz-zz!" said he.

I turned to Doctor Butters. "Hornet!" I declared.

When Mike had sized up the bee-sting he admitted that my diagnosis was prob'ly correct. "That's the trouble with these patients," he complained. "They don't take you into their confidence. Just the same, I'm goin' to attend to his teeth, for there's no tellin' when I'll catch another one."

"What's wrong with his teeth?" I questioned. "They look good to me, except they're wore down from eatin' camus. If he was a horse I'd judge him to be about a ten-year-old."

"You never can tell by lookin' at teeth what's inside of 'em. Anyhow, a nice fillin' would set 'em off. I ain't tried no fillin's yet. Gimme

that Burley drill."

I wheeled out a kind of sewing-machine; then I pedaled it while Mike dug into that Injun's hangin' wall like he had a round of holes to shoot before quittin'-time. This here was more in my line, bein' a hard-rock miner myself, and we certainly loaded a fine prospect of gold into that native's bi-cuspidor. We took his front teeth because they was the easiest to get at.

It was just like I said, this Injun's white keys was wore off short and looked like they needed something, so we laid ourselves out to supply the want. We didn't exactly fill them teeth; we merely riveted on a sort of a plowshare--a gold sod-cutter about the size of your finger-nail. How Mike got it to stick I don't know, but he must have picked up quite a number of dentist's tricks before I came. Anyhow, there she hung like a brass name-plate, and she didn't wobble hardly at all. You'd of been surprised to see what a difference it made in that redskin's looks.

We let our patient up finally and put a lookin'-glass in his hand. At first he didn't know just what to make of that fillin'; but when he seen it was real gold a grin broke over his face, his chest swelled up, and he walked out of the office and across the street to a novelty store. In a minute out he came with a little round lookin'-glass and a piece of buckskin, and the last we seen of him he was hikin' down the street, grinnin' into that mirror as happy as a child and polishin' that tusk like it had started to rust.

"Which I sure entitle a gratifyin' operation," said Mike.

"I'm in no ways proud of the job," I told him. "I feel like I'd salted a mine."

Well, me and Mike lived in them dental parlors for a couple of weeks, decoyin' occasional natives into it, pullin', spilin', fillin', and filin' more teeth than a few, but bimeby the sport got tame.

One day Mike was fakin' variations on his guitar, and I was washin' dishes, when I said: "This line is about as excitin' as a game of jack-straws. D'you know it's foot-racin' time with the Injuns?"

"What?"

"Sure. They're gettin' together at old Port Lewis to run races this week. One tribe or the other goes broke and walks home every year. If we could meet up with the winnin' crowd, down on the La Plata--"

I didn't have to say no more, for I had a hackamore on Mike's attention right there, and he quit climbin' the "G" string and put up

his box.

The next day we traded out of the tooth business and rode south down the old Navajo trail. We picked a good campin' spot--a little "flat" in a bend of the river where the grazin' was good--and we turned the ponies out.

We didn't have to wait long. A few evenings later, as we et supper we heard a big noise around the bend and knew our visitors was comin'. They must of had three hundred head of horses, besides a big outfit of blankets, buckskin, baskets, and all the plunder that an Injun outfit travels with. At sight of us in their campin'-place they halted, and the squaws and the children rode up to get a look at us.

I stepped out in front of our tent and throwed my hand to my forehead, shading my eyes--that's the Injun sign of friendship. An old chief and a couple of warriors rode forrad, Winchester to pommel, but, seein' we was alone, they sheathed their guns, and we invited 'em to eat.

It didn't take much urgins. While we fed hot biscuits to the head men the squaws pitched camp.

They was plumb elated at their winnin' up at Fort Lewis, and the gamblin' fever was on 'em strong, so right after supper they invited us to join 'em in a game of Mexican monte. I let Mike do the card-playin' for our side, because he's got a pass which is the despair of many a "tin-horn." He can take a clean Methodist-Episcopal deck, deal three hands, and have every face card so it'll answer to its Christian name. No, he didn't need no lookout, so I got myself into a game of "bounce the stick," which same, as you prob'ly know, is purely a redskin recreation. You take a handful of twigs in your hand, then throw 'em on to a flat rock endways, bettin' whether an odd or an even number will fall outside of a ring drawed in the dirt. After a couple of hours Mike strolled up and tipped me the wink that he'd dusted his victims.

"Say," he began, "there's the niftiest chicken down here that I ever see."

"Don't start any didos with the domestic relations of this tribe," I told him, "or they'll spread us out, and spread us thin. Remember, you're here on business bent, and if you bend back and forrads, from business to pleasure, and versy visa, you'll bust. These people has scrooplous ideas regardin' their wives and I respect 'em."

"She ain't married," Mike told me. "She's the chief's daughter, and she looks better to me than a silver mine."

Durin' that evening we give the impression that we was well heeled, so

the tribe wasn't in no hurry to break camp on the following morning.

Along about noon I missed Mike, and I took a stroll to look for him. I found him--and the chief's daughter--alongside of a shady trout pool. She was weavin' a horsehair bracelet onto his wrist, and I seen the flash of his ring on her finger. Mike could travel some.

He was a bit flustered, it seemed to me, and he tried to laugh the matter off, but the girl didn't. There was something about the look of her that I didn't like. I've seen a whole lot of trouble come from less than a horsehair bracelet. This here quail was mebbe seventeen; she was slim and shy, and she had big black eyes and a skin like velvet. I spoke to Mike in words of one syllable, and I drug him away with me to our tent.

That afternoon some half-grown boys got to runnin' foot-races and Mike entered. He let 'em beat him, then he offered to bet a pony that they couldn't do it again. The kids was game, and they took him quick. Mike faked the race, of course, and lost his horse, that bein' part of our program.

When it was all over I seen the chief's daughter had been watchin' us, but she didn't say nuthin'. The next mornin', however, when we got up we found a bully pinto pony tied to one of our tent stakes.

"Look who's here," said I. "Young Minnie Ha-ha has made good your losin's."

"That pony is worth forty dollars," said Mike.

"Sure. And you're as good as a squaw-man this minute. You're betrothed."

"Am I?" The idy didn't seem to faze Mike. "If that's the case," said he, "I reckon I'll play the string out. I sort of like it as far as I've gone."

"I wish she'd gave us that cream-colored mare or hers," I said. "It's worth two of this one."

"I'll get it to-day," Mike declared. And sure enough, he lost another foot-race, and the next morning the cream-colored mare was picketed in front of our tent.

Well, this didn't look good to me, and I told Mike so. I never was much of a hand to take money from women, so I served a warnin' on him that if we didn't get down to business pretty quick and make our clean-up I proposed to leave him flat on his back.



That day the young men of the tribe did a little foot-runnin', and Mike begged 'em to let him in. It was comical to see how pleased they was. They felt so sure of him that they began pro-ratin' our belongin's among one another. They laid out a half-mile course, and everybody in camp went out to the finish-line to see the contest and to bet on it. The old chief acted as judge, bookmaker, clerk of the course, referee, and stakeholder. I s'pose by the time the race was ready to start there must of been fifty ponies up, besides a lot of money, but the old bird kept every wager in his head. He rolled up a couple of blankets and placed 'em on opposite sides of the track, and showed us by motions that the first man between 'em would be declared the winner. All the money that had been bet he put in little piles on a blanket; then he give the word to get ready.

I had no trouble layin' our money at one to five, and our ponies at the same odds; then, when everything was geared up, I called Mike from his tent. Say, when he opened the fly and stepped out there was a commotion, for all he had on was his runnin'-trunks and his spiked shoes. The Injuns was in breech-cloths and moccasins, and, of course, they created no comment; but the sight of a half-nekked white man was something new to these people, and the first flash they got at Mike's fancy togs told 'em they'd once more fell a victim to the white man's wiles.

They was wise in a minute, and some of the young hot-bloods was for smokin' us up, but the chief was a sport--I got to give the old bird credit. He rared back on his hind legs and made a stormy palaver; as near as I could judge he told his ghost-dancers they'd been cold-decked, but he expected 'em to take their medicine and grin, and, anyhow, it was a lesson to 'em. Next time they'd know better'n to monkey with strangers. Whatever it was he said, he made his point, and after a right smart lot of powwowin' the entertainment proceeded. But Mike and me was as popular with them people as a couple of polecats at a picnic.

Mike certainly made a picture when he lined up at the start; he stood out like a marble statue in a slate quarry. I caught a glimpse of the chief's daughter, and her eyes was bigger than ever, and she had her hands clinched at her side. He must have looked like a god to her; but, for that matter, he was a sight to turn any untamed female heart, whether the owner et Belgian hare off of silver service or boiled jack-rabbit out of a coal-oil can. Women are funny thataway.

It's a pot-hunter's maxim never to win by a big margin, but to nose out his man at the finish. This Mike did, winnin' by a yard; then he acted as if he was all in--faked a faint, and I doused him with a sombrero of water from the creek. It was a spectacular race, at that, for at the finish the runners was bunched till a blanket would of covered 'em. When they tore into the finish I seen the chief's girl do

a trick. Mike was runnin' on the outside, and when nobody was watchin' her the little squaw kicked one of them blanket bundles about two feet down the course, givin' Mike that much the "edge." She done it clever and it would have throwed a close race.

Them savages swallowed their physic and grinned, like the chief had told 'em, and they took it standin' up. They turned over the flower of their pony herd to us, not to mention about six quarts of silver money and enough blankets to fill our tent. The old chief patted Mike on the back, then put both hands to his temples with his fingers spread out, as much as to say, "He runs like a deer."

Bimeby a buck stepped up and begun makin' signs. He pointed to the sun four times, and we gathered that he wanted us to wait four days until he could go and get another man.

Mike tipped me the wink, sayin': "They're goin' after the champeen of the tribe. That phony faint of mine done it. Will we wait? Why, say, we'd wait four years, wouldn't we? Sweet pickin's, I call it. Champeen, huh?"

"For me, I'd wait here till I was old folks," I said. "I don't aim to leave these simple savages nothin'. Nothin' at all, but a lot of idle regrets."

Well, sir, there was a heap of excitement in that camp for the next three days. All them Injuns done, was to come and look at Mike and feel of his legs and argue with one another. The first night after the race Mike tuned up his guitar, and later on I heard snatches of the "Spanish Fandango" stealin' up from the river bank. I knew what was on; I knew without lookin' that the old chief's girl was right there beside him, huggin' her knees and listenin' with both ears. I didn't like to think about it, for she was a nice little yearlin', and it looked to me like Mike was up to his usual devilment. Seemed like a low-down trick to play on an injunoo like her, and the more I studied it the warmer I got. It was a wonderful night; the moonlight drenched the valley, and there was the smell of camp-fires and horses over everything--just the sort of a night for a guitar, just the sort of a night to make your blood run hot and to draw you out into the glitter and make you race with your shadow.

When Mike moseyed in, along about ten o'clock, he was plumb loco; the moon-madness was on him strong. His eyes was as bright as silver coins, and his voice had a queer ring to it.

"What a night!" said he. "And what a life this is Lord! I'm tired of pot-huntin'. I've trimmed suckers till I'm weary; I've toted a gold brick in my pocket till my clothes bag. I'm sick of it. I'm goin' to beat this Injun champeen, take my half of our winnin's, sell off the

runty ones, and settle down."

"Where do you aim to settle?" I inquired.

"Oh, anywhere hereabouts. These are good people, and I like 'em."

"You mean you're goin' to turn out with the Injuns?" I inquired, with my mouth open. Mike had led so sudden that he had me over the ropes.

"I'm goin' to do that very little thing," he declared. "I dunno how to talk much Navajo, but I'm learnin' fast, and she got my meanin'. We understand each other, and we'll do better as time goes on. She calls me 'Emmike'! Sweet, ain't it?" He heaved a sigh, then he gargled a laugh that sounded like boilin' mush. "It ain't often a feller like me gets a swell little dame that worships him. Horses, guns, camp-fires! Can you beat it?"

"If that squaw had a soft palate or a nose like a eeclair, you wouldn't be so keen for this simple life," I told him. "She has stirred up your wickedness, Mike, and you've gone nutty. You're moon-crazy, that's all. You cut it out."

I argued half the night; but the more I talked the more I seen that Mike was stuck to be a renegade. It's a fact. If he hadn't of been a nice kid I'd of cut his hobbles and let him go; but--pshaw! Mike Butters could run too fast to be wasted among savages, and, besides, it's a terrible thing for a white man to marry an Injun. The red never dies out in the woman, but the white in the man always changes into a dirty, muddy red. I laid awake a long while tryin' to figger out a way to block his game, but the only thing I could think of was to tie him up and wear out a cinch on him. Just as I was dozin' off I had an idy. I didn't like it much at first; I had to swaller hard to down it, but the more I studied it the better it looked, so for fear I'd weaken I rolled over and went to sleep.

Mike was in earnest, and so was the girl; that much I found out the next day. And she must of learned him enough Navajo to propose marriage with, and he must of learned her enough English to say "yes," for she took possession of our camp and begun to order me around. First thing she lugged our Navajo blankets to the creek, washed 'em, then spread 'em over some bushes and beat 'em with a stick until they were as clean and soft as thistle-down. I'll admit she made a pleasant picture against the bright colors of them blankets, and I couldn't altogether blame Mike for losin' his head. He'd lost it, all right. Every time she looked at him out of them big black eyes he got as wabbly as clabber. It was plumb disgustin'.

That evenin' he give her a guitar lesson. Now Mike himself was a sad musician, and the sound of him fandangoing uncertainly up and down the

fretful spine of that instrument was a tribulation I'd put up with on account of friendship, pure and simple, but when that discord-lovin' lady cliff-dweller set all evenin' in our tent and scraped snake-dances out of them catguts with a fish-bone, I pulled my freight and laid out in the moonlight with the dogs.

Mike's infatuation served one purpose, though; he spent so much time with the squab that it give me an opportunity to work out my scheme. That guitar lesson showed me that vig'rous measures was necessary, so I dug up a file, a shoemaker's needle and some waxed thread, all of which we had in our kit.

On the fourth morning there was a stir in the camp, and we knew that the courier had got back with his runner. Pretty soon the whole village stormed up to our tent in a body.

"Let's go out and look him over," I said.

"What's the use of lookin' at him?" Mike inquired. "All Injuns look alike--except one."

I pulled back the tent fly and stepped out; then I called to Mike, for the first thing I seen was that gold fillin' of ours. Yes, sir, right there, starin' me in the eye, was the sole and shinin' monument to me and Mike's brief whirl at the science of dentistry. The face surroundin' it was stretched wide and welcome, and the minute this here new-comer reco'nized me, he drawed back his upper lip and pointed proudly to his ornament, then he dug up his lookin'-glass and his polishin'-rag and begun to dust it off. It was plain to be seen that he thought more of it than his right eye. And it impressed the other Injuns, too; they crowded up and studied it. They took turns feelin' of it, especially the squaws, and I bet if we'd had our dentist outfit with us we could of got rich right there. The chief's daughter, in particular, was took with the beauties of that gew-gaw, and she made signs to us that she wanted one just like it.

"I never noticed he was so rangy," Mike told me, when he'd sized up the new arrival. "Say, this guy looks good. He's split plumb to the larynx and I bet he can run, for all of that wind-shield."

I noticed that Mike was pretty grave when he come back in the tent, and more than once that day I caught him lookin' at the champeen, sort of studyin' him out. But for that matter this new party was gettin' his full share of attention; everywhere he went there was a trail of kids at his heels, and every time he opened his mouth he made a hit with the grown folks. The women just couldn't keep their eyes offen him, and I seen that Mike was gettin' pretty sore.

In the evenin' he made a confession that tipped off the way his mind

was workin'. "This is the first time I ever felt nervous before a race," said he. "Mebbe it's because it's goin' to be my last race; mebbe it's because that Injun knows me and ain't scared of me. Anyhow, I'm scared of \_him\_. That open-faced, Elgin-movement buck has got me tickin' fast."

"That ain't what's got your goat," I told him.

"Your cooin' dove is dazzled by that show of wealth, and you know it."

"Hell! She's just curious, that's all. She's just a kid. I--I wish I'd of known who he was when I treated him. I'd of drove a horse-shoe nail in his knee."

But all the same Mike looked worried.

It rained hard that night, and the next morning the grass was pretty wet. Mike tried it, first thing, and come back grinnin' till the top of his head was an island.

"That sod is so slippery old Flyin' Cloud can't get a good stride in his moccasins. Me, I can straddle out and take holt with my spikes. Them spikes is goin' to put us on easy street. You see! I don't care how good he is, they're goin' to give me four hundred head of broncs and a cute little pigeon to look out for 'em. Me, I'm goin' to lay back and learn to play the guitar. I'm goin' to learn it by note."

"You sure got the makin's of a squaw-man," I told him. "Seems like I've over-read your hand. I used to think you had somethin' in you besides a appetite, but I was wrong. You're plumb cultus, Mike."

"Don't get sore," he grinned. "I got my chance to beat the game and I'm goin' to take it. I can't run foot-races, and win 'em, all my life. Some day I'll step in my beard and sprain my ankle. Ambition's a funny thing. I got the ambition to quit work. Besides, she--you know--she's got a dimple you could lay your finger in. You'd ought to hear her say 'Emmike'; it's certainly cute."

We bet everything we had--everything except that pinto pony and the cream-colored mare. I held them two out, for I figgered we was goin' to need 'em and need 'em bad, if my scheme worked out.

The course--it was a quarter-mile, straight-away--was laid out along the bottom-land where the grass was thick and short. Me and the chief and his girl set on a blanket among the little piles of silver, and the rest of the merry villagers lined up close to the finish-line. We white men had been the prime attraction up till now, but it didn't take me long to see that we wasn't any more. Them people was all wrapped up in the lad with the gold name-plate, and they was rootin'

for him frantic. Last thing he done was to give his eighteen-carat squaw-catcher the once-over with his buckskin buffer, then he shined it at the chief's girl and trotted down to the startin'-line. I noticed that she glued her big-and-liquids on him and kept 'em there.

It was beautiful to watch those two men jockey for a start; the Injun was lean and hungry and mighty smart--but Mike was smarter still. Of course he got the jump.

It was a pretty start, and Mike held his lead for fifty yards or more. I'll admit I was worked up. I've had my heart in my mouth so often over his races that it's wore smooth from swallerin', but this time it just wouldn't go down. Our dental patient was runnin' an awful race, but it looked like Mike had him; then, just as the boy settled down and reached out into that long, strong stride of his'n, something happened. He slipped. He would have fell, except that he caught himself. The next second he slipped again, and Mr. "Man in Love with a Gold Fillin'" passed him.

With that them Injuns begun to speak. Some of their yells brought hunks of throat with 'em, and that whole region begun to echo as far south as the Rio Bravo.

My scheme had worked, all right. You see, when Mike was doin' his heavy courtin' I'd planted my ace in the hole; I'd took off the outer soles of his runnin'-shoes and filed the spikes almost in two, close up to the plate. When I sewed the leather back on, it never showed, but the minute he struck his gait they broke with him and he begin to miss his pull. He might have won at that, for he's got the heart of a lion, but I s'pose the surprise did as much as anything else to beat him. It made my heart bleed to see the fight he put up, but he finished six feet to the bad and fell across the mark on his face, sobbin' like a child. It's the game ones that cry when they're licked; analyze a smilin' loser and you'll find the yellow streak. I lifted him to his feet, but he was shakin' like a bush in the wind.

"Them shoes!" he wailed. "Them damned shoes!" Then he busted out again and blubbered like a kid.

Right then I done some actin'; but, pshaw! anybody can act when he has to. If I'd of overplayed my hand a nickel's worth he'd of clumb up me like a rat up a rafter and there would of been human reminders all over that neighborhood. Not but what I would have got him eventually, bein' as I had my side-arms, but I liked Mike and I wouldn't kill nobody if I was sober.

It happened that he fell right at the feet of the chief's girl, and when I lifted him up he seen her. But, say, it must have been a shock to him. Her eyes was half shut, her head was throwed back, and she was

hissin' like a rattlesnake. Mike stiffened and sort of pawed at her, but she drew away just like that other squaw in our dentist office had drawn away from her liege lord and master.

"Waugh! White man heap squaw!" said she, and with that she flirted her braids and turned to the winner of the race. She went up to him and lifted his lip with her thumb like she just had to have another look at his gold tooth, then she smiled up into his face and they walked away together without a glance in our direction.

Mike follered a step or two, then he stopped and stared around at the crowd. It was a big minute for him, and for me, too, and I'll prob'ly never forget the picture of that pantin' boy at bay among them grinnin' barbarians. The curs was yappin' at his heels, the squaws was gigglin' and makin' faces, the bucks was showin' their teeth and pointin' at his tears.

Mike never said a word. He just stooped down and peeled off his runnin'-shoes, then he threwed 'em as far as he could, right out into the river. "Who the hell would marry a dame like that?" he sobbed. "She's stuck on his jewelry."

"Come on, lad," said I; and I led him to our tent. Then, while he put on his clothes, I saddled the pinto pony and the cream-colored mare, for it was six days to the railroad.

---

Three poems from:

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems of American Patriotism*  
by Brander Matthews (Editor)

## THE CHOICE

Rudyard Kipling

April, 1917

(THE AMERICAN SPIRIT SPEAKS)

\_ To the Judge of Right and Wrong  
\_ With Whom fulfilment lies  
Our purpose and our power belong,  
\_ Our faith and sacrifice.\_

Let Freedom's Land rejoice!  
\_ Our ancient bonds are riven;  
Once more to us the eternal choice

Of Good or Ill is given.

Not at a little cost,  
Hardly by prayer or tears,  
Shall we recover the road we lost  
In the drugged and doubting years.

But, after the fires and the wrath,  
But, after searching and pain,  
His Mercy opens us a path  
To live with ourselves again.

In the Gates of Death rejoice!  
We see and hold the good--  
Bear witness, Earth, we have made our choice  
With Freedom's brotherhood!

Then praise the Lord Most High  
Whose Strength hath saved us whole,  
Who bade us choose that the Flesh should die  
And not the living Soul!

\_ To the God in Man displayed--  
Where e'er we see that Birth,  
Be love and understanding paid  
As never yet on earth! \_

\_ To the Spirit that moves in Man,  
On Whom all worlds depend,  
Be Glory since our world began  
And service to the end! \_

---

## YANKS

James W. Foley

[Sidenote: 1917-1918]

O'Leary, from Chicago, and a first-class fightin' man,  
For his father was from Kerry, where the gentle art began:  
Sergeant Dennis P. O'Leary, from somewhere on Archie Road,  
Dodgin' shells and smellin' powder while the battle ebbed and  
flowed.

And the captain says: "O'Leary, from your fightin' company  
Pick a dozen fightin' Yankees and come skirmishin' with me;



Pick a dozen fightin' devils, and I know it's you who can."  
And O'Leary, he saluted like a first-class fightin' man.

O'Leary's eye was piercin' and O'Leary's voice was clear:  
"Dimitri Georgoupoulos!" And Dimitri answered "Here!"  
Then "Vladimir Slaminsky! Step three paces to the front,  
For we're wantin' you to join us in a little Heinie hunt!"

"Garibaldi Ravioli!" Garibaldi was to share;  
And "Ole Axel Kettleson!" and "Thomas Scalp-the-Bear!"  
Who was Choctaw by inheritance, bred in the blood and bones,  
But set down in army records by the name of Thomas Jones.

"Van Winkle Schuyler Stuyvesant!" Van Winkle was a bud  
From the ancient tree of Stuyvesant and had it in his blood;  
"Don Miguel de Colombo!" Don Miguel's next of kin  
Were across the Rio Grande when Don Miguel went in.

"Ulysses Grant O'Sheridan!" Ulysses' sire, you see,  
Had been at Appomattox near the famous apple-tree;  
And "Patrick Michael Casey!" Patrick Michael, you can tell,  
Was a fightin' man by nature with three fightin' names as well.

"Joe Wheeler Lee!" And Joseph had a pair of fightin' eyes;  
And his granddad was a Johnny, as perhaps you might surmise;  
Then "Robert Bruce MacPherson!" And the Yankee squad was done  
With "Isaac Abie Cohen!" once a lightweight champion.

Then O'Leary paced 'em forward and, says he: "You Yanks, fall in!"  
And he marched 'em to the captain. "Let the skirmishin' begin."  
Says he, "The Yanks are comin', and you beat 'em if you can!"  
And saluted like a soldier and first-class fightin' man!

---

## ANY WOMAN TO A SOLDIER

Grace Ellery Channing

[Sidenote: 1917, 1918]

The day you march away--let the sun shine,  
Let everything be blue and gold and fair,  
Triumph of trumpets calling through bright air,  
Flags slanting, flowers flaunting--not a sign  
That the unbearable is now to bear,  
The day you march away.

The day you march away--this I have sworn,  
No matter what comes after, that shall be  
Hid secretly between my soul and me  
As women hide the unborn--  
You shall see brows like banners, lips that frame  
Smiles, for the pride those lips have in your name.  
You shall see soldiers in my eyes that day--  
That day, O soldier, when you march away.

The day you march away--cannot I guess?  
There will be ranks and ranks, all leading on  
To one white face, and then--the white face gone,  
And nothing left but a gray emptiness--  
Blurred moving masses, faceless, featureless--  
The day you march away.

---

Two from the Project Gutenberg etext of *Eight Harvard Poets*:

## [THOU IN WHOSE SWORD-GREAT STORY SHINE THE DEEDS]

by Edward Estlin Cummings

Thou in whose sword-great story shine the deeds  
Of history her heroes, sounds the tread  
Of those vast armies of the marching dead,  
With standards and the neighing of great steeds  
Moving to war across the smiling meads;  
Thou by whose page we break the precious bread  
Of dear communion with the past, and wed  
To valor, battle with heroic breeds;

Thou, Froissart, for that thou didst love the pen  
While others wrote in steel, accept all praise  
Of after ages, and of hungering days  
For whom the old glories move, the old trumpets cry;  
Who gav'st as one of those immortal men  
His life that his fair city might not die.

---

# THE BRIDGE

by John Dos Passos

The lonely bridge cuts dark across the marsh  
Whose long pools glow with the light  
Of a flaring summer sunset.  
At this end limp bushes overhang,  
Palely reflected in the amber-colored water;  
Among them a constant banjo-twanging of frogs,  
And shrilling of toads and of insects  
Rises and falls in chorus rhythmic and stirring.

Dark, with crumbling railing and planks,  
The bridge leads into the sunset.  
Across it many lonely figures,  
Their eyes a-flare with the sunset,  
Their faces glowing with its colors,  
Tramp past me through the evening.

I am tired of sitting quiet  
Among the bushes of the shore,  
While the dark bridge stretches onward,  
And the long pools gleam with light;  
I am tired of the shrilling of insects  
And the croaking of frogs in the rushes,  
For the wild rice in the marsh-pools  
Waves its beckoning streamers in the wind,  
And the red sky-glory fades.

---

# BROTHERS

Project Gutenberg's *Fifty years & Other Poems*, by James Weldon Johnson

See! There he stands; not brave, but with an air  
Of sullen stupor. Mark him well! Is he  
Not more like brute than man? Look in his eye!  
No light is there; none, save the glint that shines  
In the now glaring, and now shifting orbs  
Of some wild animal caught in the hunter's trap.

How came this beast in human shape and form?  
Speak, man!--We call you man because you wear  
His shape--How are you thus? Are you not from  
That docile, child-like, tender-hearted race  
Which we have known three centuries? Not from  
That more than faithful race which through three wars

Fed our dear wives and nursed our helpless babes  
Without a single breach of trust? Speak out!

I am, and am not.

Then who, why are you?

I am a thing not new, I am as old  
As human nature. I am that which lurks,  
Ready to spring whenever a bar is loosed;  
The ancient trait which fights incessantly  
Against restraint, balks at the upward climb;  
The weight forever seeking to obey  
The law of downward pull;--and I am more:  
The bitter fruit am I of planted seed;  
The resultant, the inevitable end  
Of evil forces and the powers of wrong.

Lessons in degradation, taught and learned,  
The memories of cruel sights and deeds,  
The pent-up bitterness, the unspent hate  
Filtered through fifteen generations have  
Sprung up and found in me sporadic life.  
In me the muttered curse of dying men,  
On me the stain of conquered women, and  
Consuming me the fearful fires of lust,  
Lit long ago, by other hands than mine.  
In me the down-crushed spirit, the hurled-back prayers  
Of wretches now long dead,--their dire bequests.--  
In me the echo of the stifled cry  
Of children for their bartered mothers' breasts.

I claim no race, no race claims me; I am  
No more than human dregs; degenerate;  
The monstrous offspring of the monster, Sin;  
I am--just what I am.... The race that fed  
Your wives and nursed your babes would do the same  
To-day, but I--

Enough, the brute must die!  
Quick! Chain him to that oak! It will resist  
The fire much longer than this slender pine.  
Now bring the fuel! Pile it 'round him! Wait!  
Pile not so fast or high! or we shall lose  
The agony and terror in his face.  
And now the torch! Good fuel that! the flames  
Already leap head-high. Ha! hear that shriek!  
And there's another! wilder than the first.  
Fetch water! Water! Pour a little on  
The fire, lest it should burn too fast. Hold so!

Now let it slowly blaze again. See there!  
He squirms! He groans! His eyes bulge wildly out,  
Searching around in vain appeal for help!  
Another shriek, the last! Watch how the flesh  
Grows crisp and hangs till, turned to ash, it sifts  
Down through the coils of chain that hold erect  
The ghastly frame against the bark-scorched tree.

Stop! to each man no more than one man's share.  
You take that bone, and you this tooth; the chain--  
Let us divide its links; this skull, of course,  
In fair division, to the leader comes.

And now his fiendish crime has been avenged;  
Let us back to our wives and children.--Say,  
What did he mean by those last muttered words,  
"Brothers in spirit, brothers in deed are we"?

---

## BURIED LOVE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Love Songs*, by Sara Teasdale

I have come to bury Love  
Beneath a tree,  
In the forest tall and black  
Where none can see.

I shall put no flowers at his head,  
Nor stone at his feet,  
For the mouth I loved so much  
Was bittersweet.

I shall go no more to his grave,  
For the woods are cold.  
I shall gather as much of joy  
As my hands can hold.

I shall stay all day in the sun  
Where the wide winds blow,--  
But oh, I shall cry at night  
When none will know.

---

Two from  
The Project Gutenberg Ebook of *Oxford Poetry 1917*

\_ROBERT GRAVES\_

(\_ST. JOHN'S\_)

## DOUBLE RED DAISIES

Double red daisies, they're my flowers  
Which nobody else may grow  
In a big quarrelsome house like ours  
They try it sometimes, but no,  
I root them up because they're my flowers  
Which nobody else may grow.  
\_ Claire has a tea-rose, but she didn't plant it;  
Ben has an iris, but I don't want it.  
Daisies, double red daisies for me,  
The beautifullest flowers in the garden.\_

Double red daisy, that's my mark:  
I paint it in all my books.  
It's carved high up on the beech-tree bark--  
How neat and lovely it looks!  
So don't forget that it's my trademark;  
Don't copy it in your books.  
\_ Claire has a tea-rose, but she didn't plant it;  
Ben has an iris, but I don't want it.  
Daisies, double red daisies for me,  
The beautifullest flowers in the garden.\_

---

\_DOROTHY. L. SAYERS\_

(\_SOMERVILLE\_)

## FAIR EREMBOURS

A SONG OF THE WEB. FRENCH, XII C.

When in the long-day month, the month of May,  
The Franks of France from king's court ride away,  
Reynault rides foremost, the first in rank alway.  
Passes the tower where Erembours doth stay;  
He never deigned to lift his head her way,

Ha, Reynault, ha, true love!

Fair Erembours, within the window's ray,  
Holds on her knees a web of colours gay,  
Sees Franks of France from king's court ride away,  
Sees Reynault riding the first in rank alway,  
Speaketh aloud, on this wise she doth say:  
Ha, Reynault, ha, true love!

Reynault, true love, I have beheld the day  
When if my father's castle stood on your way  
You had been sad, had I had nought to say.  
--Ill hast thou wrought with me, king's daughter, yea,  
Hast loved another, cast my love away.  
Ha, Reynault, ha, true love!

Reynault, fair sir, on relics solemnly  
I'll swear, before an hundred maidens free  
And thirty ladies that I shall bring with me,  
I never loved another man save thee;  
Take this amends, I'll give thee kisses three.  
Ha, Reynault, ha, true love!

O then Count Reynault up by the stairway ran,  
Wide were his shoulders, and small his girdle's span,  
His hair close-curled, and very fair to scan,  
In all the world is not so fine a man.  
Erembours saw him, and so to weep began.  
Ha, Reynault, ha, true love!

Count Reynault mounts into her highest towers  
And sets him on a bed of broidered flowers,  
And close beside him sits fair Erembours.  
Then they take up their loves of former hours.  
Ha, Reynault, ha, true love!

---

# NIAGARA

a portion of *America at War with Germany, Beginning April, 1917*

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Chinese Nightingale*, by Vachel Lindsay

## I

Within the town of Buffalo  
Are prosy men with leaden eyes.  
Like ants they worry to and fro,  
(Important men, in Buffalo.)  
But only twenty miles away  
A deathless glory is at play:  
Niagara, Niagara.

The women buy their lace and cry:--  
"O such a delicate design,"  
And over ostrich feathers sigh,  
By counters there, in Buffalo.  
The children haunt the trinket shops,  
They buy false-faces, bells, and tops,  
Forgetting great Niagara.

Within the town of Buffalo  
Are stores with garnets, sapphires, pearls,  
Rubies, emeralds aglow,--  
Opal chains in Buffalo,  
Cherished symbols of success.  
They value not your rainbow dress:--  
Niagara, Niagara.

The shaggy meaning of her name  
This Buffalo, this recreant town,  
Sharps and lawyers prune and tame:  
Few pioneers in Buffalo;  
Except young lovers flushed and fleet  
And winds hallooing down the street:  
"Niagara, Niagara."

The journalists are sick of ink:  
Boy prodigals are lost in wine,  
By night where white and red lights blink,  
The eyes of Death, in Buffalo.  
And only twenty miles away  
Are starlit rocks and healing spray:--  
Niagara, Niagara.

Above the town a tiny bird,  
A shining speck at sleepy dawn,



Forgets the ant-hill so absurd,  
This self-important Buffalo.  
Descending twenty miles away  
He bathes his wings at break of day--  
Niagara, Niagara.

## II

What marching men of Buffalo  
Flood the streets in rash crusade?  
Fools-to-free-the-world, they go,  
Primeval hearts from Buffalo.  
Red cataracts of France today  
Awake, three thousand miles away  
An echo of Niagara,  
The cataract Niagara.

---

## WINTER QUIET

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Al Que Quiere!*, by William Carlos Williams

Limb to limb, mouth to mouth  
with the bleached grass  
silver mist lies upon the back yards  
among the outhouses.  
    The dwarf trees  
pirouette awkwardly to it--  
whirling round on one toe;  
the big tree smiles and glances upward!  
Tense with suppressed excitement  
the fences watch where the ground  
has humped an aching shoulder for the ecstasy.

---

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